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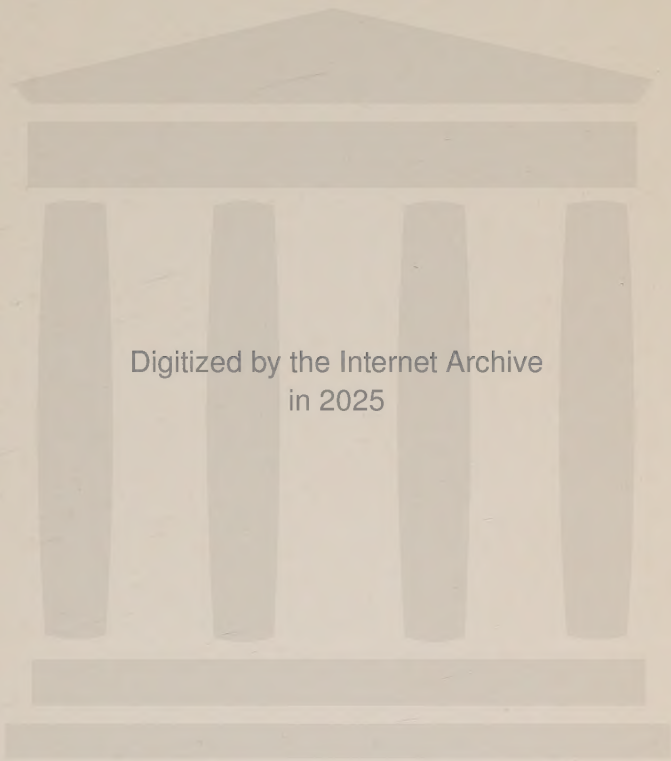
VICTOR HUGO:
HIS WORK AND LOVE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VICTOR HUGO IN 1829.
From the portrait by Devéria.

VICTOR HUGO : :

HIS WORK AND LOVE :: By LT.-COL. ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD, D.S.O.

Author of "Sidelights on the Court of France," "Madame de Staël, Her Trials and Triumphs," "Thérèse of the Revolution," etc., etc. :: :: :: ::

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

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NEW YORK:
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY
1923

TO MY FRIEND

H. G. PARSONS, Esq.,

AT WHOSE KIND SUGGESTION
I COMPILED THESE PAGES.

A. C. P. H.

Printed in Great Britain.

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Victor Hugo

His Work and Love

CHAPTER I

VICTOR HUGO'S EARLY MARRIAGE

In the year 1802 was born at Besançon, in the east of France, an infant who was to be destined to shine to an extraordinary extent in the literary world.

The third son of Léopold-Sigisbert Hugo, a general in the armies of Napoleon, was baptised by the names of Victor-Marie. He was to become a brilliant poet, remarkable at an early age as a dramatist who, as the exponent of Romanticism, the revolt against the classical pedantry of the past, was to divide all the playgoers of Paris into two bitterly antagonistic parties.

As a writer of prose also, this child was to become famous to such a degree that to this day the names of his romantic work, *Les Misérables*, and his previously written historical romance, *Notre Dame de Paris*, are known all over the world.

Victor's father, General Hugo, was a brilliant young officer who, after distinguished service elsewhere, was employed for some years in Spain during the course of the Peninsular war.

To this country General Hugo sent for his wife and children, and installed them in Madrid, in a mansion known as the Palace Masserano. Thus it came to pass that the earliest education of the youthful Victor was received in Spain. Unfortunately, the

child's father, the general, was a gay dog—gay even among the devil-may-care officers of that day. To such an extent did General Hugo flaunt his unfaithfulness to his wife that Joseph Bonaparte, whom his brother, the Emperor Napoleon, had made King of Spain, remonstrated with him upon the scandalous example that he set in deserting Madame Hugo to form a *ménage* with a young widow, who went by the name of the Comtesse de Salcano. In a sharply-worded letter of reproof, written at the beginning of the year 1812, the kind-hearted Joseph informed General Hugo that the condition of his family was one that he wished no longer to witness. He added that, much as he was attached to the general and appreciated his services, unless he should speedily amend his ways he would be compelled to send him back to France.

The example of the father was a bad one for the youthful Victor and his two elder brothers, Abel and Eugène, especially as, after his return to France, he resumed his interrupted *liaison* with the Comtesse de Salcano, and made his home with her at Blois.

Madame Hugo and her two younger children, however, resided in Paris. Here Victor's education was continued. He soon distinguished himself at the École Polytechnique, both in mathematics and the writing of poetry. When Victor was only fourteen years of age he produced a tragedy, and, his genius having become rapidly more pronounced, not long after he had left school his first work, *Odes et Ballades*, was placed in a publisher's hands and greatly appreciated by the public.

At this time Victor's mother died, whereupon the general wasted no time in regrets for his wife. He regularised his situation with his Comtesse by making her his bride.

This marriage took place within a couple of months

of his wife's death, and, that there might be no doubt about the matter, General Hugo sent round a notice to his friends.

In this he stated that he had married the Comtesse Salcano, " in order to legalise the purely religious ties that had hitherto united him to that lady."

When this marriage took palce at Blois, Victor and his brothers were still in Paris, and here we soon find his father writing and reproaching the young fellow that he does not shew himself sufficiently civil to his step-mother. To this Victor replies tersely: " I have got nothing against your present wife, not having the honour of her acquaintance. I have for her, however, the respect due to your noble name."

At this time Victor Hugo was himself in love, passionately, madly in love, with a good-looking young lady named Adèle Foucher. He had known her ever since his return from Spain, and imagined himself in love from the time when, both being children, they had first met.

Notwithstanding the fact that Adèle's father was a highly-placed official in the war administration of Louis XVIII., and had already held good posts in the military departments in the time of Napoleon, Victor's mother, before she died, had been opposed to her son forming any connection with the family of the Chevalier Foucher.

After her death, however, his father's new bride interposed with General Hugo upon Victor's behalf, with the result that he consented to his son's marriage to the object of his adoration.

Now in writing Victor Hugo changed his tone in his letters to his father, calling his stepmother " your excellent wife," instead of rudely saying that he had not the pleasure of knowing her.

Ardent and extravagant were the letters of the

young poet, both to his *fiancée* and his friends, during the time of his betrothal. Extravagancies may be expected from a young man impatiently awaiting his bliss, but it takes a Victor Hugo of twenty to write to the lady in the following extravagant strain :

" Adèle ! Do you know what makes the three parts of my happiness ? I realise that I shall at all events have been your spouse, were it only for one day. We shall be married to-morrow and I would kill myself the day after. I shall have been happy, and no one will have the right to make you any reproaches."

This letter of joyful anticipation was written in October, 1821, and it must be confessed that it was not a very cheerful outlook that the young poet presented to his Adèle, that of becoming a widow on the morrow of their union. Plenty of time was, however, afforded the fair Adèle in which to forget her lover's suicidal threat, since the marriage did not take place until a year later, upon October 12, 1822.

It would seem that the literary talent of Victor Hugo, which was, indeed, shared by his elder brothers, Abel and Eugène, was inherited from his father. General Hugo was a native of Lorraine, his wife being from Nantes, in Brittany. As a mere captain, Sigisbert Hugo had already distinguished himself before Victor saw the light upon February 26th, 1802. Not only had he risen to the rank of general by the time that he had reached the age of thirty-four, but he was a singularly agreeable man and amiable companion to all with whom he came in contact.

His wife's name was Sophie Trébuchet ; she was the daughter of a shipbuilder.

The general, a favourite of Joseph Bonaparte in Spain, had already fought under him in Italy, where

he destroyed the bands of the famous brigand chief, Fra Diavolo. For this feat of arms it was that he was promoted to the rank of colonel.

The literary taste of General Hugo was displayed upon many occasions. Not only did he publish a number of articles on military subjects, but he became remarkable by the interesting compilation of his *Mémoires*.

When Napoleon Bonaparte transferred his brother Joseph from the throne of Naples to that of Spain, it was owing to Joseph's affection for General Hugo that he begged him to accompany him to the Iberian peninsula.

Of Victor's brothers, Abel was the senior by four years. Like his father, Abel was an officer in Joseph's army, having received his commission at the early age of fourteen. Abel was subsequently the author of many books. He also collaborated with Eugène and Victor in a publication which went by the title of the *Conservateur littéraire*.

The fate of Eugène was tragic. One year older than Victor Hugo, and a poet who celebrated in an ode the tragic murder by Napoleon of that unhappy member of the Bourbon family, the Duc d'Enghien, Eugène had the misfortune to fix his affections upon Adèle Foucher, the young lady affianced to his brother.

So violent was the passion of the unfortunate Eugène, that a few days after his brother's marriage to Adèle he went off his head.

Eugène was discovered in his bedroom, in which he had lighted a number of candles, laying about him with a sabre and chopping all the furniture to pieces.

So great was his violence that it became necessary to confine Eugène Hugo in the madhouse of Charenton.

Here, without any signs of recovery, he remained for years, the victim of the wildest fantasies. Eugène

constantly imagined that he heard the sounds of the massacre of women in the vaults below.

This brother of Victor Hugo died while still shut up at Charenton in the year 1837. By this time the loves of Victor Hugo and Adèle Foucher had become as Dead Sea fruit.

CHAPTER II

HUGO'S METHODS IN WRITING PROSE

It was as a poet that Victor Hugo first displayed his genius to the world when, in 1822, the year of his marriage, he published his *Odes et Ballades*, a second part of which he brought out a few years later.

His first play was a tragedy named *Cromwell*, the style of which was a manifestation of the declaration of independence on the part of Romanticism against the hard-and-fast conventions of the age of Louis XIV.

Although this tragedy was one impossible to act and difficult even to read, it had a great effect on French literature, and as a literary masterpiece of the new school, placed Victor Hugo at the head of the party of the Romanticists.

While his subsequent poems, *Les Orientales*, displayed the poet as the greatest master of verse who had ever yet been seen in France, it was when, in 1830, he produced at the Théatre-Français his five-act drama, *Hernani*, that the French literary and artistic world rang with his name, and the battle of style commenced to rage furiously in Paris.

Victor was a man who never omitted any opportunity of booming and advertising himself in every possible way. He even caused a book concerning himself, but evidently dictated by him, to be published by his wife as her work, the title of which was *Victor Hugo, Related by a Witness of His Life*. It may, therefore, well be

imagined that he was careful upon the occasion of the production of *Hernani* at the Français to pack the house to the greatest extent in his power with his own adherents of the Romanticist school. The Classicists were, however, also assembled in their strength, and the mere fact that the play was brilliantly written in victorious verse did not deter them from furiously declaring that *Hernani* was an act of revolution that must be violently stamped out. The result was that for many nights the battle of the Classicists and the Romantics was waged furiously at the Théatre-Français.

In the end Hugo, however, proved the victor, and from the date of the production of *Hernani* the supremacy of Romanticism over the old cut-and-dried methods of the past became assured.

For no less than fifty-two years longer after the famous success of this bitterly-contested tragedy, Victor Hugo continued to write and to publish one thing or another—plays, prose, or poetry.

It is as a writer of prose that he, perhaps, shines supreme in the eyes of the present generation, who can always take up one of his romances with pleasure. Nor, in spite of the enormous digressions of the frequent side-issues with which they are packed, and the occasional absurdities to be met with in the novels of interminable length, can the reader fail to be touched, even dazzled, by the intimate knowledge of the depths of human nature from every standpoint revealed by the novelist.

In one of Victor Hugo's works this artistic probing of humanity to its depths stands out supreme. The book in question is *Les Misérables*. The length of this work in the original French is so great that we have seen recently an edition in ten volumes published in Paris and in Brussels in 1863.

The book was first issued to the public in the

previous year, and it was then published *in ten languages!* As there were no type-written copies in those days and the original work was, we know, copied out by Hugo's companion for fifty years, Juliette Drouet, presumably the publication was withheld until translations could be made from printed copies of the work. This must have caused a very lengthy delay and considerable impatience in consequence not only to author and publisher, but to an anxiously-expectant public.

To give an example of Victor Hugo's extraordinary method of introducing in his novel the relation of incidents which scarcely, if at all, affect the story in any way, we can recollect many chapters, containing about a hundred pages, giving a capital historical description of the battle of Waterloo. This published alone would make excellent and instructive reading, being fairly written without bias in favour of either French or English, and giving various interesting touches on the bearing of Napoleon, Wellington, and Blücher during the battle, and other incidents in the historic fight.

In so far as the story is concerned, the only use of the battle of Waterloo is the author's thrilling description of the manner in which the French cavalry, charging the British, fall pell-mell, one on the top of another, into a sunken roadway of which they have no knowledge, where numbers of riders and horses, inextricably mixed up, perish miserably together in a conglomerate mass. After night has fallen over the battlefield, the ghouls that rob the dead and the dying appear upon the scene. Among these we are shewn a ruffian of the name of Thénardier robbing those lying in a heterogeneous mass in rivers of blood in the hollow way. This Thénardier subsequently becomes the unmitigated scoundrel who is the villain of the book, but

the whole battle of Waterloo, described from early morn before the first shot is fired to long after nightfall, when the Prussians are pursuing and mercilessly cutting down the flying French, is by no means required as a *mise en scène* to bring this rascal into the story, which could have been done in a couple of lines.

The truth is that Victor Hugo does not so much write a story as put down everything that comes into his head, and whenever a thought comes uppermost in his brain he is perfectly ready to lay the thread of his story on one side for ten, twenty, or a hundred pages in order to give that thought expression. For example, when in *Les Misérables* he is describing the street fighting in the streets of Paris in June, 1832, and the active part taken in it by several personages in the book, he suddenly remembers the subsequent revolution of 1848. Accordingly, he breaks off his tale in order to give a detailed account of the barricades erected in the streets of Paris at that period. Similarly he, without rhyme or reason, introduces a chapter or two to consider the virtues or weaknesses of Louis-Philippe as a ruler; while because one of his characters, the little street-urchin, Gavroche, and some of the thieves who are the accomplices of Thénardier, happen to talk slang, Victor Hugo interrupts his narrative with a chapter or two investigating the origin of the slang words of the day.

A book written upon these sketchy lines would be impossible to-day, especially if meant to be taken seriously as a novel. Victor Hugo's *Misérables*, however, must be considered as being at the same time an analytical description of the Paris of the first half of the nineteenth century, and one of the most pathetic romances ever produced by any author in any tongue. We will, therefore, endeavour to recall some of the main points of this remarkable work, especially as the

effort may serve to give expression to the innermost ideas of the brain that conceived it. Strangely enough, we have twice lately seen it asserted that that brain was unstable in spite of all its evidences of genius. A French writer, who was evidently Hugo's enemy, frankly called him mad, while in an encyclopædia we find these words concerning Hugo: "A combination of Teuton and Celt, and, moreover, absolutely lacking in sanity—he was a lyrist of the first order, and such a master of words and cadences, such an artist in rhythms and rhymes, that he may fairly be said to have found French poetry a place of brick and stucco and left it a palace builded of jewels—a palace of the *Arabian Nights*."

CHAPTER III

A THRILLING ROMANCE ("LES MISÉRABLES")

THE story of *Les Misérables* begins when, a couple of years after the battle of Waterloo and the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne of France, we find a lonely traveller entering a country town on foot. The man is very strongly built but miserable-looking, with a repellent, defiant expression, and all that he carries consists of a knapsack and a big stick.

To the see in which is included this country town and the surrounding country there has, since the downfall of the Emperor Napoleon, been appointed a bishop of singularly simple and charitable habits. Never had there been any member of the Church so self-denying—he had even given up his palace to be turned into a hospital, while himself occupying with his sister and one servant the small building in which the hospital had been previously placed in the outskirts of the town. Moreover, of this humble dwelling the excellent prelate never would allow the door to be locked.

The above-mentioned traveller was entering the town just as the shades of evening began to fall. Before turning in to the principal inn, which was crowded by jovial waggoners, he was accosted by a gendarme who compelled him to show his yellow passport containing his personal description.

Having entered the inn, where his looks were

found against him, the landlord nevertheless consented to serve the traveller with supper and to give him a bed upon learning that he had money and could pay. While warming himself before the cheerful blaze and waiting to share the savoury meal being prepared for the waggoners, the weary man met with a disappointment. The landlord, who had stepped without for a few minutes, upon re-entering the warm kitchen, informed the traveller brusquely that he would neither serve him with food nor allow him to stay on the premises; no not even to sleep on the straw in the barn.

Expostulation was in vain. "You are Jean Valjean, an ex-galley-slave—get out!" said the landlord.

Wearily and sadly the hungry man left the building, only to meet with the same fate at the other inn in the town. There, just as Jean Valjean, for such was indeed the man's name—was about to sit down to his meal, a waggoner came in who related what had taken place at the first hostelry he had visited. He was again expelled.

Night had fallen and the weather was bitterly cold as, with despair on his face and rage in his heart against all mankind, the miserable man sunk down upon a stone bench in front of a church, after having knocked at several doors and been refused admittance. Even had he in vain sought to share with a dog a large kennel he had found in a garden, for the animal had flown furiously at him and he had been fortunate to escape from it with no more damage than torn clothing.

He had walked that day many miles from the bagnio at Toulon, after having been chained to an oar at the galleys for nineteen years. And what had been his offence in the first instance? Stealing a loaf wherewith to feed his sister's starving children, for

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whom he had already denuded himself of all that he possessed. His original sentence had been one of five years to the galleys, and he had been sent with a prison gang from Paris to Toulon with an iron collar round his neck and a chain on his leg which fastened him to his neighbours. Four times had he attempted to escape from his hell upon earth, but each time been recaptured, each attempt at escape being punished with years of additional slavery in the galleys.

Nineteen years! All the time of Napoleon's supremacy in France, from the time when he first became Consul and throughout the years of the Empire to the moment of his final downfall!

All that time had Jean Valjean worn an iron collar and dragged an iron chain at his leg for having tried in vain to feed some starving children.

Upon eventually being released, he found himself defrauded by the authorities of some twenty odd francs of the sum due to him by the Government on leaving the bagnio. Again he had found himself cheated at Toulon upon doing some porter's work for a contractor. Owing to his immense strength, Jean Valjean had done the work of two men, but the contractor had taken advantage of the fact that he had been a convict to pay him only half of the sum paid to his fellow labourers. Lying in the cold on the stone bench, starving and weary, Jean Valjean, had it but been in his power, would willingly have destroyed with one blow of his heavy club all those in the inhospitable town to which his steps had borne him. All the world was unjust! All society was evil!

A charitable lady came out of the darkened church, and, passing him, spoke to him. He answered her but roughly. She offered him a few pence, all the money she had on her, and on hearing his story of being refused admittance everywhere, pointed out a building

in the distance faintly discernible through the gloom.

"Go and knock there," said the lady, and then left him, after adding, "I think you will gain admittance."

Wearily he dragged himself up to his feet, and thinking that the house was, maybe, another inn, he stumbled to it and knocked.

Instantly the door was opened by two elderly women, both of whom, however, drew back, disconcerted at the hangdog appearance of the powerfully-built visitor, armed, as he was, with a heavy bludgeon. Evidently they would have liked to have left him standing outside; he, however, asked them for food and shelter, adding that he was able and willing to pay for both.

From the gloom beyond a dining-table covered with a rough cloth, which stood near a low fire, emerged a plainly-dressed old man of benevolent appearance, and wearing a skull cap. Thinking him the innkeeper, Jean repeated his request.

"Come in, my brother, we shall be honoured to have you share our repast with us," said the old gentleman, "and also to have you pass the night here. What a cold night it is and what a fortunate circumstance that you thought of coming to our door," he added.

Turning to the two women, he told them to put another chair at the table and to prepare it as was customary when expecting an honoured guest.

These instructions to his sister and his housekeeper implied that the worthy bishop, into whose dwelling Jean Valjean had stumbled unawares, intended that his silver forks and spoons and large silver candlesticks should be placed upon the table. While he had denuded himself of everything else for the sake of the

poor, and had even sold for their sake the carriage and horses supplied to him by the Government, the bishop held on to his few remaining bits of silver, to be deprived of which would, he considered, be to be deprived of the symbols of gentility. He felt that these he could not resign.

The poor man at the door did not understand his reception at all. He stared open-mouthed and could not at first even speak civilly, for he suspected some trap. But as the kindness of his welcome was continued and he observed the unusual costume of his kind host, he came to the conclusion that it was to no inn, but to the dwelling of the village curé, that he had wandered. For even had the old gentleman been dressed in episcopal attire, Jean Valjean would not have recognised it, since he had never seen a bishop in his life, of which nineteen years had been wasted in the awful slavery of the galleys.

During the whole of those nineteen years Jean Valjean had never been addressed with a kindly word. Instead it had been his daily lot to feel the lash of the gang overseer's whip curling round his half-naked body or limbs, even upon his head and face. His comrades had been murderers and thieves for the most part, though many had been sentenced for crimes as venial as his own, which, however, had been brutally characterised by the prosecuting Government attorney-general by the severe name of " theft with burglary," since, in order to steal a loaf, Jean had broken a baker's window.

Theft with burglary was an offence punishable with the galleys, and even in the nineteenth century any further theft, no matter how trivial, was treated as " relapse " and liable to the punishment of death.

What wonder that the soul of the unhappy convict had become so utterly brutalised that he was unable

to understand kindness when at last it came his way? Although he had worked honestly after leaving the bagnio, had he not been defrauded of his rights, nominally on account of his unhappy past? Had he not again just been hounded through the town with ignominy when he had been willing to pay his way? Was not every man's hand unjustly raised against him, and did not he owe retaliation and enmity to every man in turn? With a mind as yet incapable of being softened by the influences of good, he accepted the bishop's food and the bed he offered him.

But in the night Jean Valjean stole the table silver and made his escape by the window.

CHAPTER IV

JEAN VALJEAN AND THE BISHOP'S DEAL

THE scene in the bishop's humble dwelling in the morning following the discovery of the theft is graphic in the extreme. When the sister and the housekeeper announce the disappearance of the silver from the cupboard in which it had been placed while the ill-looking visitor was present, their anger is great, and they cannot help expecting that the resentment of the bishop will likewise be aroused. Was not this silver, were not this pair of beautiful candlesticks, the sole remaining objects of pride of the worthy old priest, all that he had reserved to himself wherewith to adorn his dining-table when entertaining the priests of his diocese, whose households, for that matter, were maintained on a more lavish scale than his own? Fortunately, the candlesticks were not stolen.

The two old women looked in vain for the expected outbreak of anger or grief.

"The poor man needed the silver more than we did," said the bishop quietly. "In future we can dine with tin forks and spoons; they will do just as well."

Presently three gendarmes appear, pushing before them the ex-convict, in whose knapsack they have discovered the silver which all in the parish knew as belonging to their beloved bishop.

Before the gendarmes can say a word, the old man steps forward. Addressing Jean Valjean, he remarks:

"My good friend, you have treated me very badly. Did not I give you my silver candlesticks as well as my table silver? Why, then, did you leave them behind? But fortunately that is soon remedied."

Going to the mantelpiece, the bishop reached down the pair of candlesticks, brought them pleasantly to the thief and made him place them in his knapsack.

The gendarmes stared open-mouthed. "What, then, he told the truth?"

"Of course; you can retire."

Left alone with Jean Valjean, who hung his head stupefied as if trying to take things in that his brain was incapable of comprehending, the bishop explained his gift to the man who did not know even the meaning of the word "kindness"; who thought that all humanity was cruel and bad.

"My son, in making you my little present, I am doing a deal. I am purchasing you from the influence of the evil spirit to deliver you into the hands of the good God, whose ways you will follow in future. Go in peace, and my blessing goes with you. Sell the silver; it will bring you in two hundred francs and help you to make an honest start."

The spirit of good does not, however, enter all at once into the brutalised mind, unable in a moment to sever itself from the sinister influences of the past. While sitting beside a fence, pondering in a dazed manner upon the strange events that have befallen him, Jean Valjean is passed by a little Savoyard boy with a hurdy-gurdy and a marmot. The boy, tossing up his earnings as he walks singing along, drops a two-franc piece. It rolls towards the ex-convict, who mechanically places his foot upon it and keeps it there. In spite of the boy's prayers that he will return the money, he makes no reply; merely looks scowlingly.

At length, upon his angrily ejaculating the words,

" Be off ! " the little Savoyard is frightened by his savage expression, and runs away as hard as he can go.

Jean Valjean remains, however, for long with knitted brows, making no effort to pick up the money. The incident seems to have made no impression upon him, his mind is elsewhere.

At length, moving his foot, he perceives the two-franc piece and his senses return to him. He runs with it in the direction that the Savoyard boy had taken, shouting loudly to him, intending to return the money.

It is too late, the boy is nowhere to be found. Realising that he has committed a fresh crime, the wretched man at length flings himself upon the ground and weeps.

A curé comes riding by.

" Have you seen a Savoyard boy ? "

" No, I have seen no boy."

" Then take this five-franc piece for your poor." He seizes the curé's stirrup leather. " I insist that it is impossible that you have not seen a boy, but take this further crown for your poor."

Alarmed at the despairing, wild looks of the man accosting him, the priest waits for no more possible crowns, but strikes his horse violently with his whip and rides away.

That night we see the figure of Jean Valjean on his knees on the bishop's doorstep, his face buried in his hands.

CHAPTER V

HUGO BRINGS IN FANTINE AND JAVERT

At this point Victor Hugo artistically leaves both the malefactor and the bishop—the reader being left wondering whether or no they meet again, a fact that is never disclosed.

Meanwhile, a few years having elapsed, we have scenes in Paris which in no way bear upon what has gone before in the book. These scenes consist of pictures of the immoral life of four gay and careless students of the Quartier Latin and four equally gay and careless young girls of the *grisette* class. The chapters dealing with these young people, while essentially French, would be considered laboured and boring if presented to us by a French writer to-day. They seem to be aimless and to lead nowhere. When the long-drawn-out episode ends with the utterly absurd simultaneous running away of all the students from all the girls, it is with relief that the reader says also good-bye to the lot. However, he finds that he is to meet one of the eight again. The youngest of the girls, Fantine by name, the only one that had seemed to have any heart or modesty in her nature, is found to have been deserted by her lover when likely to become a mother.

As in the case of the description of the whole of the battle of Waterloo being introduced merely to lead up to the mention of the rascal Thénardier, so has Hugo now

let himself go with many pages of description of impossible students merely to introduce Fantine. We leave her in this interesting condition to be introduced to a new episode in a provincial town, which goes by the name of M., in the Department of M.

This town we find in a very flourishing condition, entirely owing to the skill and industry of the leading manufacturer, who has invented a new and cheap process for the manufacture of the artificial jet which has for many years past been the staple industry of the place. This man's name is M. Madeleine, and he has amassed a large fortune while shedding prosperity in all directions around him. Exceedingly charitable, assisting the Church, building hospitals and endowing them, while refusing employment in his factories to no person of either sex who is willing to behave decently, M. Madeleine is a bachelor of retiring habits and who leads a simple mode of life. Evidently of humble origin yet continually improving his mind by reading, the advent of M. Madeleine to the town of M. had occurred upon the night of a big fire, in which by his wonderful bravery and superhuman exertions he had saved the wife and children of the captain of the gendarmerie.

With such an introduction nobody had ever troubled to inquire into the antecedents of the hero, who had, moreover, almost immediately after his arrival at M. made known the discovery by which at first the town only, but later the whole district, profited. While, in spite of his limitless charities, M. Madeleine's fortune continued to increase, he did not place the whole of it upon new buildings or machinery at M., but lodged from time to time considerable sums with Lafitte, the celebrated banker in Paris. Thus he felt himself protected should any unforeseen crash ever come in his business affairs.

Meanwhile, so universally was he beloved, that official representations concerning his good qualities and the good that he had done for the district were forwarded to the Government at Paris. As a result M. Madeleine was first offered the order of the Légion d'Honneur and then the post of Mayor of M., but both of these dignities he respectfully declined.

Public opinion was, however, so strongly against M. Madeleine declining the post of mayor that, subsequently, upon its again becoming vacant, he was compelled to accept it by the voice of the people. It was especially the remark of one poor woman that decided him: "What opportunities you would have of doing good, M. Madeleine, if only you would consent to be mayor!"

It is in vain, even after he has become Mayor of M., that M. Madeleine is pestered to enter society. The ladies of the place will, however, scarcely consent to leave in peace this bachelor rolling in money but neglecting to make use of its advantages for his own comfort. Legendary stories having been spread about him, to the effect that his sleeping apartment had been transformed into a spiritual grotto full of crosses and images, a band of curious ladies one day called upon him, and asked if they might be permitted to see this chamber.

"Certainly," replied the mayor; "walk up, ladies."

Their disappointment was great; it was just an ordinary room, plainly furnished. The only unusual objects in it were two large candlesticks, in rather a tarnished condition, upon the mantelpiece. An officious spinster took an opportunity of examining these, and remarked when outside:

"Those candlesticks were certainly silver; I saw the hall-marks upon them."

The reader somehow thinks that he has seen those candlesticks before !

A man in the town of M., remarkable for his stiff appearance and stiff nature, is M. Javert, the Inspector of Police. Javert prides himself upon his unflinching probity ; for no consideration in the world would he allow a criminal to escape. To maintain the law he would, if necessary, hang his father and mother, and grandparents into the bargain. Such a word as "mercy" is not understood by Javert; he would consider himself disgraced were he ever to allow himself to be swayed by any such humanitarian feeling and thereby allow any possible evildoer to slip through his fingers. The law first, second, and all the time ; duty rigidly observed upon all occasions ; no stepping aside, no deviation from the path of rectitude ; such were the ingrained principles which sustained the moral nature of this excessively rigid official.

On account of his stern and forbidding nature, M. Javert was as much disliked and feared in the town of M. as the mayor, under whose orders he was, was beloved. Men, and women too, even if they had done no wrong, would rather step aside than meet the Police Inspector face to face. There was something in the steely glance of his cold, grey eye that penetrated through one and gave one the creeps. It seemed to say, "Ah, you have a little secret to conceal, have you ? But don't flatter yourself that it will long be a secret from Javert, he reads it partly in your mind already ; look out for the hand-cuffs and the law when he has learnt a little more about it. Do not think that he is in the least deceived by the obsequious manner in which you take off your hat and say, 'Good morning, Monsieur l'Inspecteur.'" You shudder and pass on hurriedly, with a feeling of chill as if you had met a ghost. You are glad to get into the warm sunshine.

Strict servant of the law and authority, Javert always obeyed without question the slightest order given him by "Monsieur le Maire." Even should these orders entail in some instances a relaxation of severity towards some miserable rapscallion who had been "pinched" for a first offence, and whom he himself would have unflinchingly condemned to unlimited black-hole, Javert obeyed them willingly when coming from one whom the law set above him. For his own conscience was not disturbed upon such occasions. If the mayor was weakly good-natured, that was his affair—who was he to question the mayor? His own duty was to obey his superiors to the letter, in the same way as he compelled his inferiors to obey him, and there was not one of them who would venture to oppose him by even a glance. He had them well in hand.

There was, however, something about the broad shoulders of M. Madeleine, as Javert stood slightly behind him and strictly at attention in the office of the Mairie, that was to him at times vaguely reminiscent of someone he had met in the dim and distant past. His grizzled hair and benevolent features, however, did not convey anything, any more than did the well-made clothing of the pattern usually worn by the well-to-do, honest bourgeois which the mayor affected. However, in spite of himself, while strictly obeying his orders, indeed, going out of his way to be punctilious in his dutiful compliance of them, Javert often found his official brain searching through its archives in vain for a clue to the fancied resemblance.

Leaving for awhile the town of M., its mayor and police inspector, we must return to Paris, to Fantine the erstwhile light-hearted *grisette*, who is now left with a fatherless little girl upon her hands. Although willing to work to maintain this infant, after awhile

work fails. Fantine then, taking her two-year-old child with her, starts for the country and arrives at an inn at Montmirail, in front of which is a woman playing with two little girls. It is a low-class tavern, the signboard of which is painted with a representative soldier of the armies of Napoleon, and the name, " The Sergeant of Waterloo."

The woman has not an agreeable face, but she makes up to Fantine on observing that she is decently dressed and, above all, that the clothes that the child wears are rich, while by adroit questioning she finds out that a bundle that Fantine carries contains more child's clothing of the same high order. She offers to take care of Fantine's child for her at a low monthly rate, while she proceeds on her journey in search of occupation to M.

The husband, however, comes out of the inn and makes the terms a little harder, alleging the hardness of the times. He is a most sinister-looking individual and none other than that Thénardier who robbed the dead in the sunken way upon the battlefield of Waterloo. Among those dead, Thénardier had been despoiling a French colonel of his ring, watch, and money, when he regained his senses upon being dragged up into the air from under the bodies above him. This badly-wounded officer thanks the man whom he supposes to be employed in saving his life, asks his rank and name and bids the self-styled Sergeant Thénardier to take his valuables as his reward. The scoundrel, who already has them in his own pocket, declares that some scamp must have stolen them ; he then leaves the officer, who vows him eternal gratitude.

Such is the man in whose house and care Fantine leaves her pretty little child on the following morning when she resumes her journey, after having paid down in advance a sum of money to the Thénardiers.

On arrival at the town of M., Fantine had no difficulty in obtaining work. The first comer she met told her to apply at the jet factories of M. Madeleine, where none was rejected, either male or female. All that was necessary, Fantine was told, was that the women employed should lead a strictly moral life while the workmen were required to be sober and to work honestly during their hours.

Fantine obtained employment from the woman overseer to whom she applied, and saying nothing about her little girl whom she had left at Montmirail, she was enrolled as being a single woman.

She was soon earning good wages, and while living in respectable lodgings at M., remitted regularly the money for the keep of her little daughter Cosette to the Thénardiers at Montmirail.

It was not long before these miscreants began to play tricks with Fantine. Constantly they raised the amount of money demanded for Cosette's *pension;* they asked for sums of money for clothes that the poor little child never received; for her education, for medicine, and for doctors that were equally imaginary. From the first Cosette's clothing had been stolen for the two little Thénardier girls, while she had been left in the meanest kind of dirty rags to feed on the floor with the dog and the cat. By the time that she had reached the age of five, the miserable little thing was turned into the servant and drudge of the household, and could be seen by the rough people who frequented the inn and the neighbours daily struggling with a broom, the handle of which was twice as high as herself. Even was poor little Cosette sent with a large bucket to fetch from a spring at a distance away in a wood the water for the inn and for the horses of the carters that frequented it.

While for poor Fantine the struggle to meet the

extortionate demands of the Thénardiers became worse and worse, yet for some years she bravely contrived to do so by denying herself of everything for the sake of her beloved little Cosette. Moreover, in spite of all the temptations to go wrong, Fantine continued to lead a virtuous existence.

It is not to be imagined, however, that a girl possessing her exceptional good looks could escape the jealousy of some of the women who were her fellow-workers in the jet factory. Especially was this the case as there was a mystery about her. She kept herself to herself and avoided giving the confidences that were sought of her.

The other women determined to ferret out her secret; they discovered that she was in the habit of employing a professional letter-writer in the town to send letters for her, and they told each other that she had a lover with whom she corresponded at Montmirail. At length some of them made the letter-writer drunk, whereupon he disclosed the fact that Fantine's letters, although short and accompanied by remittances, had always something to do with a child.

It was now the turn of a horrible busybody to intervene. She was a woman of some means, and although during the Revolution she had married a de-frocked monk —now dead—had contrived after the Bourbon restoration to keep on good terms with the priests by giving ostentatiously to Church charities. This dreadful creature took the coach one day and went to Montmirail, and the following day returned to say that all the rumours were true. Fantine was the mother of a child who was being kept at the inn known as "The Sergeant of Waterloo." The wicked woman added to this information the statement that Fantine was a woman of infamous character.

Notwithstanding that for about five years she had

led an irreproachable life, the woman overseer of the factory, without acquainting M. Madeleine with the matter, sent for Fantine, paid her her wages, gave her fifty francs in addition, and turned her out.

The description given by Victor Hugo of the downward course of Fantine from this moment is poignant in the extreme. He omits no harrowing detail of her increasing misery and gradually increasing degradation. Vainly she endeavoured to keep honest—but how to live when turned out of one lodging after another? How also to remit to the infamous Thénardiers, who, when they find that her money is not coming along, write that Cosette is at the point of death for need of the necessary drugs?

Fantine at length took a lover, then another one; she cut off her beautiful golden tresses and sold them, eventually she even sold for two *louis d'or* two of her perfect front teeth to a quack dentist. She went from bad to worse, and from want of proper covering, contracted a cold on her chest which developed into lung disease.

All of this time she imagined that it was by the orders of M. Madeleine, who was now Mayor of M., that she had been, all unheard, thus brutally thrust into the street. With every curse that the mind could conceive, she now cursed the name of the man for whom everyone else in the town had nothing but blessings. It had never occurred to her to seek an interview with the mayor, as the forewoman had distinctly given her to understand that her dismissal was carried out by his instructions. What, then, the good of seeing one so cruel-hearted?

One cold night, while pursuing the vile trade on the streets to which she had been driven by her destitution and despair, Fantine, very thinly clad, walked in front of a brilliantly lighted café. She was behaving

herself decently, speaking to nobody, when one of the richest young bourgeois of the town who was lounging by the open door, thought it would be amusing to bait her.

Every time that she came by he made some offensive remark, and the mere fact that she made no reply whatever to his insults only made him the more cruel. Being very much pleased with himself and thinking that he had an easy prey, he at length thought that he would amuse still more the grinning bystanders, who were enjoying the fun of seeing a defenceless young creature tormented. Placing himself directly in Fantine's path, so that she could not pass, he pushed his face right into hers and called her by a vile and disgraceful name.

Human nature can only stand a certain amount, and that of the unhappy girl had reached its limit of endurance. Screaming at the top of her voice, she threw herself upon her tormentor like a tiger-cat. With her nails she tore him down both sides of the face so that his cheeks streamed with blood. She seized him by the collar, and although the wretched man vainly struggled to escape, held him with a strength that seemed superhuman while shaking him so that the teeth rattled in his head.

The foolish onlookers, who had hitherto been jeering with the aggressor at Fantine, now loudly laughed at the fatuous young gentleman who, hatless and with his cravat in shreds, was getting so much the worst of it. A crowd had assembled, and many clapped loudly and playfully applauded the insulted girl who, deaf and blind with rage, neither saw nor heard any save him upon whom she was avenging herself.

Among the insulting remarks that the young dandy had made had been : " How hideous you are without your front teeth ! Who would be fool enough

to kiss you ? " In her fury, Fantine remembered that if she had lost two, all those teeth that she had left were sound and good. With them she seized her victim by the lower part of the face near the ear, and held on to him like a bulldog. In vain he struck at her with his fists. Fantine never felt his blows, while the applauding circle laughed louder than ever.

It was at this moment that a tall figure surged through the ring of onlookers and two hands of iron seized Fantine by the shoulders, flinging her violently to one side.

There were cries of " M. Javert ! It is M. Javert ! " and all the bystanders instantly made themselves scarce, many retreating into the café whence some of them had issued.

Fantine had fallen to the ground, coughing violently and panting for breath, but in a second the police inspector called to a couple of his men, who dragged her violently to her feet and hurried her off to the police-station. As for her aggressor, the sole cause of the disturbance, the police left him to sneak off shamefacedly without interference from them in any way.

CHAPTER VI

ANTAGONISM OF JAVERT AND THE MAYOR

After the arrest of Fantine, Victor Hugo conducts his saddened readers with her and Javert to the hall of the police-station, where there is a very powerful scene representing the inflexibility of the inspector's nature. Standing with his back to the stove, he listens without the slightest trace of emotion while Fantine, on her knees at his feet, pleads to him that she had not been the one to blame. With heart-broken cries she begs of him not to lock her up for six months. For the sake of her Cosette, her dear little Cosette, who must surely die unless she can send the money required ; she begs of Javert to leave her at liberty to earn the sum required at once for her little girl's medical attendance.

With the stoniest of glances, the police inspector coldly observes the wretched young creature who had disgraced the town by daring to lay violent hands upon one of its richest citizens.

At length, tired of listening, M. Javert laconically orders the policemen present to lock up the weeping girl, who was now annoying him by clasping him round the ankles.

At this moment there is an interruption. " Hold ! " cries a voice at the back of the hall, which is in shadow. " Release that girl," adds quickly the mayor, who had entered unnoticed a few minutes earlier.

The two gendarmes, who had laid their hands upon Fantine's thin shoulders, let go their grasp while looking up to the inspector for further instructions.

"Release her, M. le Maire, but it is impossible!" replies Javert respectfully. "She has, like a wild beast, attacked one of our most respected bourgeois. She has offended the dignity of the law by committing an assault in the principal street of the town."

"Nevertheless, I say release her," repeated the mayor. "I was present during part of the *fracas* outside of the café, and the bystanders all assured me that it was the bourgeois who was to blame. He behaved vilely, the girl was innocent."

"But M. Madeleine!" protested Inspector Javert vehemently. For once he had lost in a measure his attitude of respectful self-control. He was not wont to answer thus.

"M. Madeleine!" It is now Fantine who cries out the name. "M. Madeleine!" Is that, then, her enemy who is speaking, her torturer, who has brought her to so much misery? He who is causing her own starvation and the death of little Cosette? She springs to her feet, rushes at the mayor, abuses him in a flood of words for ejecting her from the factory, and finally spits in his face!

With one of his powerful hands M. Madeleine grasps the infuriated girl by both her emaciated wrists, and controls her easily as she commences to cough terribly.

"Now M. le Maire, you see what kind of a fury it is! You will surely rescind your order of release."

"Not at all," replies the mayor as imperturbably as if nothing at all unusual were taking place. "I say that she is to be released and delivered over to the sisters in charge of the infirmary attached to my factory."

Now it was that at last the whole nature of Police

Inspector Javert seemed to change. He ventured boldly to stand up to the mayor, he argued with him, even refused to obey his orders, insisted upon his right to condemn to imprisonment the woman whom he had caused to be arrested. Finally he again ordered the astounded policemen to remove Fantine to the cells below.

With not the slightest sign of anger upon his countenace, the mayor listened silently to this outbreak of insubordination on the part of the usually dignified official.

Then, stepping forward and pointing to the door, he observed with a look and voice of authority:

"Javert! Go!"

The police inspector for a moment looked M. Madeleine straight in the face. Then, bending his head humbly, he walked to the door and left the police-station.

"Now," said the mayor to the two gendarmes, "convey this poor woman to the infirmary quickly. She is fainting for want of food from her starved appearance. You will have to carry her on a litter, and the sisters will put her to bed."

At this moment Fantine actually fell to the ground as one dead, and she was still senseless when M. Madeleine went round to the infirmary to inquire about her a little later. The doctor had, however, been sent for, and he succeeded in bringing her round while the two sisters were preparing the nourishing soup which he said was what was absolutely needed lest she should die of inanition. He spoke, however, seriously of her condition.

M. Madeleine visited Fantine daily during the next few days, throughout which she remained unable to rise. He had made inquiries about her case and discharged the forewoman who had sent her off from the

factory without referring her case to him. From Fantine herself he had learned all her sad story and her anxiety concerning her Cosette, when in order to relieve her mind M. Madeleine sent off in her name money to Montmirail in order to satisfy the Thénardiers' exorbitant latest charges, and also the outstanding *pension* owing for the little girl at its enhanced rate.

The shame of poor Fantine in discovering the beautiful nature of the man whom she had vilified and spat upon was painful in the extreme, but he consoled her as a father, and, taking down the crucifix at the head of her bed, led her thoughts gently to Christ her Redeemer. He reminded her of the Saviour's forgiveness of Magdalen, and thus brought balm to the troubled soul that had been so sadly buffeted and torn.

It was not long, however, before poor Fantine's peace of mind concerning the welfare of her Cosette was again disturbed as, emboldened by the success of their previous attempts to extract money, the Thénardiers sent another trumped-up claim, for the sum of no less than six hundred and fifty francs this time.

The mayor sent the money as before, while determining in his heart that he would go in person and bring back Cosette before long to the longing mother, who, while still confined to her bed of sickness, babbled about the little daughter for whom her heart ached to one of the sisters, who was sweetly sympathetic. With this object in view, M. Madeleine caused a proper legal order to be made in Fantine's name authorising the Thénardiers to deliver the child in their care over to the bearer of the document.

For some time after the scene in the police-station nothing was seen of the police inspector in the town of M., for he had been away in accordance with some summons of the Prefect of the Province.

One day, however, Javert arrived in the mayor's office, and having saluted that dignitary with his usual respect of former times, stood waiting to be spoken to.

M. Madeleine, who was writing, left him for a long time standing stiffly at attention in his usual place, a little behind him, ere he turned.

" Well, Javert, what is it ? "

" M. le Maire, I have come to request you to be good enough to forward my resignation, for I have failed in my duty on two points and am no longer fit to be retained in the service."

" On two points, Javert ? "

" Yes, M. le Maire. What is more, I have proved myself a fool only worthy of the name of a common *mouchard*, a police-spy, instead of the title of inspector. I no longer retain my own self-respect."

" Be good enough to explain the two points."

" The first was when, on the occasion of the arrest of that woman Fantine, now in the infirmary built and endowed by M. le Maire, I allowed myself to address M. le Maire in an improper manner. I even allowed myself to question the orders of M. le Maire, my superior. For this alone I merit dismissal."

" That is all forgotten and done with, Javert."

" There is worse than this. I hope that M. le Maire will pardon my presumption. I committed the error of confounding M. le Maire with a galley slave."

" A galley slave ! " M. Madeleine could not help starting.

" Yes, a galley slave of the name of Jean Valjean, whom I remember formerly in the bagnio at Toulon. He was a man of immense strength, and, M. le Maire will pardon me, for long his own broad shoulders reminded me of someone or other, I could not recall whom. And then one day when that ill-grained citizen Fauchelevent, who has never seemed to me to behave

to M. le Maire with proper deference, was in danger of his life with a waggon on the top of him, M. le Maire, owing to his great strength, got under the waggon, lifted it up alone with his shoulders and saved Fauchelevent at the risk of his own life. And then I said to myself: 'Surely, there is only one man in France who could do that, and that is Jean Valjean.'"

"Then why did you not say so, Javert?"

"Because I was still not certain, M. le Maire; but something occurred later to make me make a fool of myself and for that I wish my resignation to be sent on. I have it here all ready written out."

"Proceed," said M. Madeleine.

"It was on the night to which I have referred when I very wrongly resisted M. le Maire's authority. As I left the police-office when I was very angry I looked M. le Maire straight in the face. I recognised him. I was certain then that I recognised in him Jean Valjean who, having committed a further crime in robbing a Savoyard boy since his release, is liable to re-arrest as 'a relapse,' and a relapse is liable on occasion to be sentenced even to death, as M. le Maire knows."

"Then why did you not arrest me?"

"Because I foolishly thought that behind M. le Maire's back I would gratify my pique and report him to headquarters, and obtain thence the direct order to do so, which could not possibly be disregarded by any official in the province or in this town, not even if M. le Maire gave instructions that he was not to be arrested."

"And what happened then?"

"I received the reply that M. le Maire could not be Jean Valjean, because Jean Valjean was already safely in custody at Arras, and that I was nothing but a fool for my pains. It is on that account that I

request M. le Maire to forward my application to be relieved of my functions."

" Jean Valjean already in custody ! "

" Yes, he passed by the name of Champmatthieu, but he has been recognised by three ex-convicts, and now I, too, have seen him and recognised him. He is very like M. le Maire in some ways, but of course there is no mistaking the real Jean Valjean when one sees him. Well, they will have him back again in the galleys before long, if he does not get worse than that. He is to be tried at Arras to-morrow afternoon or evening, and as the Attorney-General is prosecuting, there is not the faintest chance that he will get off. A good lawyer that, he never lets a criminal escape. I am indeed thankful that through my lamentable error I never sent M. le Maire before him."

M. Madeleine made no further comment on Javert's story of the recapture of Jean Valjean, but informed him that the matter of his resignation from the service must wait until he had fulfilled certain pressing duties necessary to be performed at M. or in the neighbourhood. Having given Javert instructions concerning these in detail, the mayor dismissed the repentant police inspector to his work.

When the mayor was left alone he pondered for a time in his office. What did it mean, this story of a man definitely recognised by three ex-galley slaves as Jean Valjean, recognised also by a fourth in the shape of Javert ; a man who would be most certainly condemned to the awful sentence of the galleys for life, if not to the guillotine ? He had, we omitted to state, been arrested on the charge of " theft with burglary," as he had been found with a broken branch of an apple tree, on which were some apples, in his hand. The man's simple defence was that the wind had broken off the branch, which he had picked up on the road

outside an orchard wall. This wall he was accused of scaling, in which consisted the burglary.

None better than the mayor knew that this whole accusation was a fallacy—that the man was innocent! What was he himself to do in the matter?

To begin with, he went to the infirmary to see Fantine, when he gave particular instructions to the good sister who took the chief care of her, to allow her to want for nothing. He gave to this sister a considerable sum of money to be employed for Fantine's benefit at any time, without it being necessary to refer to him.

With Fantine herself M. Madeleine had an affecting interview. She was sinking in health and looking very frail, but sleeping when the mayor came to her bedside. Fantine presently opened her big eyes to see him seated beside her, and gazing ardently at the crucifix over her head.

"I saw you in my sleep," she said, "and I knew you were my good angel and meditating bringing me my Cosette. Is it not so?"

"She will be with you very soon now, Fantine; be of good cheer."

After a time he left her wreathed in smiles, happy beyond measure in the thought that she was to be so soon reunited to her darling child, whom she pictured as a lovely little girl of seven, prettily attired in the choice clothing which had been paid for for her.

Ah! if Fantine could have seen the real little Cosette, half naked in her rags, daily beaten and kicked, and gnawing bones with the dog and cat!

CHAPTER VII

A WONDERFUL PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

THE part of the story of *Les Misérables* which now ensues goes a long way towards justifying Victor Hugo in his choice of a title. In it we find a wonderful psychological study of the soul of a man torn in two directions at once with equal force; of one who sees only misery looming ahead for himself if by an extraordinary effort of self-compulsion he should follow the dictates of his conscience and do that which he feels to be really right, while realising that should he pursue this course, many others may suffer indirectly, owing to his following the strict line of moral rectitude.

If ever there were an artist of words, a prober into the depths of human consciousness, a writer who possessed and exercised the highest degree of literary skill in such a way as to cause the reader to feel as his own the poignant sensations of his wonderful hero, that artist was surely the author of *Les Misérables!* If any has equalled, no writer of fiction has ever surpassed, Victor Hugo in his studies of the human mind, its grandeurs and its depths.

To return now to the Mayor of M., him whom all knew as M. Madeleine, the benefactor of the town, the friend of the poor. We left him by the bedside of poor Fantine, ministering to her and bringing joy and cheerfulness to her heart, in the infirmary which his own generosity had built and endowed, while she was

waited upon by the good sisters of charity whose bread he supplied, and comforted daily by the visits and assiduities of the doctor whom he paid.

The good Mayor of M., the man whom not only the rescued Fantine but all the sick, all the poor, looked upon as an angel from heaven, the man whose name was never pronounced without a good word from the well-to-do, whose prosperity he had increased, and a blessing from those in want and misery, whose distress he alleviated! Well, what was the Mayor of M., in other words, Jean Valjean—to do now?

That was the problem by which he was confronted as, turning from the infirmary door, he walked through the town, avoiding the neighbourhood of his own factories, crowded with human beings whom he maintained, and selecting the quietest streets. Passing the house inhabited by the curé, he paused at the door, lifted the door-knocker, and stood thinking a moment.

But no, the help that he sought now could come from no priest living on this earth. The spirit of the good bishop, who had recently died, the bishop who had bought him from the powers of evil to deliver him over to God, might, however, be even now near at hand to counsel him in his terrible dilemma.

Could he allow an innocent man to be branded with felony in his place? Allow a man to be sent to the galleys for life for the crime of "relapse" in having robbed a little Savoyard boy of the sum of two francs, when he was himself the thief?

What, then, was the alternative? The alternative was to declare openly that the man recognised by four witnesses as being Jean Valjean was not the rightful owner of that name, but that he, M. Madeleine, the mayor of M., was Jean Valjean, a robber and ex-galley slave.

He quietly lowered the uplifted door-knocker,

turned from the curé's door, and walked slowly on.

All unconsciously, his feet bore him to the door of a man who let horses and carriages, and by this person he was welcomed obsequiously. In what way could he serve M. le Maire ? Anything he had was at M. le Maire's disposal.

" Have you got a horse capable of doing at least sixty—perhaps seventy—miles in a day ? "

" It is a long distance, M. le Maire, but I have such a horse, a famous trotter. He will not, however, allow himself to be mounted, he would have to go in a little light *calèche*. To what place would M. le Maire be going, and how many stops would there be on the road where the horse could be baited ? Also, would M. le Maire be able to drive himself and would he see the horse fed so that the grooms at the inns should not steal the corn paid for ? "

" There are three stopping-places. Yes, I can drive, and will see the horse fed myself. Please have the *calèche* at my door at four o'clock to-morrow morning."

Pulling out his pocket-book, the mayor said he would prefer to pay in advance, and had, moreover, no objection to paying liberally for such a good horse.

Knowing that it was M. Madeleine's custom to pay generously for everything, the jobbing master opened his mouth wide in the figure he mentioned. It was only after he had pocketed the bank-notes and the mayor had departed promptly after paying, that the owner of the horse and *calèche* remembered that he had received no answer to his question as to their proposed destination on the morrow, which question he had repeated before M. Madeleine left, although, oddly enough, he had not seemed to hear him. He went in and discussed the matter with his wife, observing to her that from the mention of the three stopping-places

on the way he was inclined to think that it must be Arras to which the mayor was thinking of going. His wife could not, however, see that anything mattered so long as he had got a good roll of the mayor's bills safely in his pocket.

When in his own home once more, after but an attempt at eating the supper which his faithful old housekeeper had pressed upon him, Jean Valjean retired to his room. Going to a locked cupboard, he took out a knapsack and a bludgeon concealed therein. After having taken a few papers and a two-franc piece from the knapsack, he threw them into the large fire on the hearth. He burnt up the knapsack and the heavy bludgeon also. Then he sat down to think, with his head and arms on the table in front of him.

Could he do this terrible thing—resign his decent, religious, respectable life, the good name that he had won, voluntarily to condemn himself once more to the awful galleys, the iron ring on his neck, the chain on his foot, the hard plank to sleep on, the cold, the overseer's lash? Nineteen years of that awful torment he had already undergone in the company of ruffians of the deepest dye, but all that he had long since put behind him, to lead an entirely different existence. It was as though he had died and passed from all that misery to be born again and become an entirely different man. Could the good God intend him once again, for no fresh crime on his part, to resume that awful life of torment, a life of which the anguish would be all the greater now that he had learned that there was another one on such a much higher plane? Could the good God require of him to resign the benevolent existence that he led, to relinquish all those who depended on him, a whole township? Surely not! It would not be right of him to abandon all of those whom he had made happy; to leave them to gradually

go downhill again, as they so surely would. On that head he had no delusions. As his had been the brain to conceive, so his had been the mind to organise the whole flourishing industry of the place, to keep it going ; moreover, to abolish all jealousies, to smooth over difficulties between rival firms when such existed. Did not everybody come to M. Madeleine—depend upon M. Madeleine ? Was it not M. Madeleine's purse that was always open for the amelioration of the prisons, the hospitals, the infirmaries, the old, decrepid, and sick ? In case an epidemic should again visit the town, as one had already, who would there be to enforce the necessary sanitary precautions, and to bring in, as he had done, the extra doctors and nurses ? Then, too, who would pay for the decent interment of the indigent poor ? Was there anybody else in the town of M. to whom the surviving relatives could apply for help in such cases with the certainty of receiving it ?

And for what reason should he desert all these poor people dependent upon him ? Why should he leave a now thriving industry to fall to pieces for want of his controlling hand ? Could it be right in the whole scheme of things that he should abandon thousands for the sake of one unknown individual, who was very likely a thief, an old offender deserving of punishment in any case. Even should he sacrifice himself for the purpose of saving one possible criminal from the galleys, was it fair to desert so many who had done no wrong ?

But in reality was it for the sake of this unknown man that he wished to give himself up to justice or for his own sake, the sake of his own personal soul, of which he desired the purification at no matter what awful cost to himself ? No one compelled him to give himself once more into the hands of the cruel law. He was perfectly safe should he hold his tongue. There

was a man ready to hand to suffer, in the shape of the criminal arrested for stealing apples, one to whom four individuals were ready to swear as being none other than Jean Valjean, the old galley-slave. What reason for him, then, to make himself known? No one on earth, not even Javert, would now ever have the least suspicion of him. With Jean Valjean safely laid by the heels, there could not possibly ever again be any suspicion directed towards himself. Who knew but that this strange imbroglio might be a providential arrangement designed by higher powers than those of man in order to continue to cause the greatest happiness of the greatest number, a providential arrangement whereby the town of M. and all its inhabitants should continue to flourish through his agency? After all, perhaps, his duty was to remain where he was and say nothing, do nothing.

Oh, if only the good bishop were by his side to aid him, to counsel him in this bitter moment of his life. But perhaps he was actually present? He thought he felt a spirit behind him. The soul-torn man lifted his head from the table and gazed around him, behind him ino the gloom. He could see nothing, but he felt relieved in some way as though a friend were by his side, one who would help him to bear his cross.

Still not knowing, however, which course to follow, he laid his head down again, and from sheer weariness at length fell asleep, or into a kind of stupor.

But a few minutes seemed to have elapsed when there was a disturbance behind him; his old housekeeper had entered the room.

"What is the matter?" Jean Valjean inquired, looking dazed.

"M. le Maire, there is a horse and *calèche* at the door."

"What horse and *calèche?* What do you mean?"

" I do not know, only that it is a white horse ; the man knocked me up and when I went to the door he told me that I was to inform M. le Maire that it had come for him."

" Come for me ! " He went to the window in a semi-stupefied condition and looked out.

Yes, there was some sort of a gig, with two blazing lights burning, standing in front of the house.

Returning to his table, Jean Valjean sat down and said nothing.

" Well, M. le Maire, what am I to tell the man ? " asked the old woman presently impatiently. " Am I to tell him to stay or go away ? "

" Tell him ? Oh, tell him that I am coming down."

Having put on an overcoat, for it was a cold, frosty night—a minute or two later he followed the old woman down to the door of his house. He mounted into the *calèche,* took the reins in his hands and drove off, without a word either to her or the man who had brought the *calèche.*

She stared after him, astonished. She had never seen such a strange look upon M. Madeleine's face—it was as if his soul were elsewhere. Where could he be going at this hour ?

Presently, with a shiver, she turned and went within.

In order to give to the man who thus drove off into the night every opportunity for remaining the respected M. Madeleine who had been offered and refused the cross of the Légion d'Honneur, Victor Hugo piles up difficulties in his way of arriving at Arras in time for the trial of the unfortunate Champmatthieu.

First of all, there is a swiftly-driven stage-coach coming from Arras, which in the night has a collision in passing with the *calèche,* of which two spokes of a wheel are knocked out while the hub is also cracked. The damage is only found out at the first stopping-

place in the morning, but there it is discovered that it is so serious that it will take the wheelwrights at least forty-eight hours to execute repairs. It is in vain that the *calèche* driver offers more and more money, the work simply can not be done.

On the top of this, no vehicle or horse can be procured wherewith to continue the journey. It is with an involuntary sigh of relief that Jean Valjean is about to bow to the inevitable, when suddenly a little boy who has heard all the people declaring that there is no horse or carriage available, says that that is an error, for his mother has got just what is wanted. The new *calèche* is not hired, but bought and paid for, and the journey continued, Arras being eventually entered after nightfall.

Now there are further delays, and, to make things more exciting, it is made to appear as if the trial of Champmatthieu has been completed. When it is discovered by Jean Valjean that it is another case that has been finished, while that of the man who is accused in his name is only adjourned, he is unable to obtain admission to the crowded court. It is all most exciting, everything leads the reader to suppose that for one reason or another the noble-hearted man who seems prepared to sacrifice himself will, through no fault of his own, be prevented from doing so. The reader's feelings are wound up every time some new obstacle intervenes, and he hopes that it will prove to be some obstacle that cannot indeed be surmounted.

But no ; after some agonising minutes of final hesitation in a room behind the judges' daïs, the supposed Mayor of M., to whom the judge has sent a cordial invitation to enter upon receipt of his card, turns a door-knob and silently takes his place behind the barristers conducting the case, by whom, as by the judge, his entry is unperceived.

The court is badly lighted, but from his post in the darker part of the hall, Jean Valjean is able clearly to perceive that the prisoner is a countryman who does indeed bear a considerable resemblance to himself in former days. He is also presently able to recognise in the three principal witnesses, galley-slaves who had been with him in the bagnio at Toulon. The three convicts have all grown considerably older in appearance, but, as it happens, they are all men with whom he had served for a term of years of his awful penal servitude ; he, therefore, knows them well.

In no part of his writings does Victor Hugo display his talent more than in this court scene, especially in the sarcastic touches with which he shews up the hollow compliments that pass between the Attorney-General, who is the prosecuting counsel for the Crown, and his learned brother appearing for the defence. But for the ex-convict, who had been through it all before in his own person, it is an awful thing to witness the badgering of the innocent prisoner by the cruel barrister, and to hear the poor wretch insulted for what is termed " an assumed simplicity which conceals a diabolical cunning calculated to deceive the representatives of the law." Were not the whole scene so tragic, it would be amusing to follow the manner in which the self-sufficient prosecutor insists to the prisoner, who listens open-mouthed, that he has cleverly fabricated his name out of the combination of the word Champ, for Jean, with the name Matthieu, which was that of Jean Valjean's mother, and that, therefore, there is no doubt of his identity.

The *dénouement* comes when the Mayor of M. steps out from behind the judge's daïs to say : " Release that man ! I am Jean Valjean ! "

The judge then calls for a doctor, as the distinguished M. Madeleine has evidently lost his senses.

It is most sad! The deranged mayor, however, proves to each of the three convicts in turn that he is indeed their old fellow-prisoner. The court is confounded and all in it aghast at the nobility of his act of self-sacrifice. As no order is given for his arrest, Jean Valjean bows to the judge and walks slowly to the door of the court, which is opened for him.

CHAPTER VIII

HUGO AN ARTIST IN THRILLS AND PATHOS

We have not dwelt at length upon the detail of the preceding court scene, for there is so much in it that to give a little only would not be to do it justice. For instance, the mixture of pathos and humour in the comportment of the bewildered prisoner, which the prosecutor persuades the court to be merely assumed stupidity, is most cleverly rendered. Had the reader himself been present in that court-house, he would undoubtedly have been convinced by the eloquent advocate, with all those present, that the gaping Champmatthieu is a cunning old rascal, who, from long practice in crime, is able to assume any part to suit any occasion. So cunning was he, so well did he simulate innocence, such effrontery did he display in venturing to declare ignorance of the very name of Jean Valjean, that even the jurymen and most of the people in the packed court-house were deceived.

No wonder that the anger of the virtuous Attorney-General was aroused with a calculating villain, a hardened convict, possessed of such dramatic art that he seemed at one moment of the trial likely to slip through his fingers and escape his well-merited punishment of death or a sentence for life to the galleys, from which a hardened ruffian of his type ought never to have been released by a too merciful Government.

Fortunately for the enraged Attorney-General, he

had at hand his three ex-convict witnesses wherewith to confront this calculating scoundrel who was laughing at him in his sleeve and thinking to make him lose his case and, incidentally, damage his great reputation. With these he would confound the clever scamp despite all his hypocritical simulations of outraged virtue, of lamb-like innocence.

Confound him he certainly did, for never was there seen such a picture of astonishment personified as that presented by that clever dog, that past-master in the art of deception, Champmatthieu, when, one after another, his three old associates of the bagnio swore to his face that they knew him perfectly well, that he had been their comrade for years. All had gone well, as it should; the villain was unmasked, and, with a look of triumph upon his face, the Attorney-General was demanding the utmost penalties that the law affords upon the head of the abandoned criminal, when, to dash his cup of triumph to the ground, occurred that astounding interruption of the course of justice.

"Release that man! I am Jean Valjean!"

And then it had been the three ex-galley-slaves who had been confounded, as one by one M. Madeleine, the great inventor, whose fame had long since reached Paris, took them in hand and cross-examined them.

Of each in turn he was able to describe some peculiarity, some tattoo-mark, some injury to a limb or cicatrice caused by the excision of some tumour or by molten metal falling upon the flesh and eating deeply into it.

As these distinctive marks were verified by the men themselves before the court and crowded audience, all alike were thrilled by emotion. When there was no further doubt possible as to his identity, it had been that Jean Valjean, after, in a few dignified words, representing to the jury the necessity of acquitting

Champmatthieu, had stood silently facing the judge, waiting to hear the order given for his arrest.

The hour had grown late ; some of the oil lamps illuminating the audience hall had burned themselves out, but the light that burned above the judge's desk revealed clearly to all the broad-shouldered man standing facing the judge. When he had come into the court his hair had been grey, it was now a snowy white ! The judge had remained incapable of speech, the barristers, jurymen, witnesses, prisoner, audience, all likewise remained spellbound, struck dumb by the immensity of the sacrifice of which they beheld the accomplishment before their eyes.

When, after bowing to the judge, the white-haired man turned and passed slowly through the long hall of audience, all, by an involuntary movement, rose to their feet. Otherwise, not a word, not a movement, save that of one near the door, who respectfully held it open to allow the heart-broken man to pass out into the darkness of the night.

Was there ever such a pen-picture ? Could anything be more beautiful than this situation of all in the darkened hall, from the judge to the court ushers, being struck dumb by their realisation of the immensity of the tragedy, the magnificence of the action of the God-inspired man giving up everything in this world to return to a life of infamy to save a stranger whom he had never before heard of ?

. . . . .

To return to a life of infamy ! Yes, as he took his seat in the night mail-coach to return to M., Jean Valjean had no doubt whatever as to that.

The judge would recover his senses—the Attorney-General, baulked of his prey in one direction, would seek it in another. Well, he did not intend to hide ;

they knew where to find him and could take him when they liked. Would not he for that matter find Javert on the spot, Javert or another, it did not matter—his life was ruined; all that edifice that he had been so carefully building up for years had now crumbled under his feet. Never again could it be re-erected!

Before his arrest, which he knew must befall shortly, Jean Valjean wished to accomplish two objects. One was to arrange for the fetching from Montmirail and bringing to Fantine her little child Cosette; the other to write to his banker, Lafitte, in Paris, to make certain arrangements by which he could, if necessary, withdraw a very large sum in cash at a moment's notice.

The letter he contrived to post before anyone was aware of his return to the town of M. He then went to the infirmary to visit Fantine, who was fully convinced that the absence of the good mayor for a couple of days had been caused by his having gone in person to Montmirail in order to bring her her so much longed-for little Cosette.

At this point in his story Victor Hugo lets his pen flow with a fecundity that reveals the fertility of his imagination. Incident succeeds incident and thrill follows thrill. We will endeavour to epitomise.

While Jean Valjean is in the infirmary and indulging the delighted Fantine in her phantasy that he has brought back Cosette with him, and that she shall see her as soon as the doctor permits, Police-Inspector Javert enters with an air of insolent triumph upon his countenance. A child's laughter is heard merrily ringing without.

"Oh, Sister, dear Sister," Fantine cries, "that is Cosette's laugh! The dear M. Madeleine has brought her to me. Do beg of the doctor to let me see her now without delay!"

"'Dear M. Madeleine!' There is no M. Madeleine!" exclaims Javert brutally. "Your M. Madeleine is nothing but an abominable convict! I come with a warrant for his arrest and am going to send him back to the galleys where he belongs. Come along, Jean Valjean!"

The shock is too great! Fantine raises herself in the bed, gives a wailing cry, flings her arms out before her, and falls back, dead, her arm hanging limply out of the bed.

"Miscreant, you have killed that woman! Behold your handiwork!" exclaims Jean Valjean, as he bends over the poor girl, gently closes her eyes and crosses her hands upon her bosom.

Regardless of the presence of death, calling to two police officers behind him to bring the handcuffs, Javert advances with the intention of seizing him whom he has so long known as Mayor of M.

He is not quick enough! With a bound across the room the ex-convict, using his immense strength, breaks up an unoccupied bed and drives Javert back with a bar of iron thus obtained. Javert is absolutely cowed, and, obeying the order given him, docilely waits without until, after having taken down the crucifix from the wall, Jean Valjean kneels and prays by the side of the dead girl.

Only when he has finished his prayer and gently laid the crucifix upon Fantine's lips, Jean Valjean bids farewell to the faithful Sister of Charity and passes without, to deliver himself up to Javert.

Imagine the consternation of the inhabitants of the town of M. upon learning that their well-beloved mayor, M. Madeleine, is in the city prison, where Police-Inspector Javert, in accordance with orders brought by an express messenger from Arras, has lodged him.

No details are yet known; the town hums with anger and excitement like a hive of bees that has been violently disturbed.

We said that our author gives us thrill after thrill in this part of his admirable romance, and two are to follow immediately. Javert may put in prison the man whom he long has hated without rhyme or reason, but can he keep him there?

He does not display much of the acumen of the first-class police official when he becomes oblivious of the wonderful strength of the ex-convict.

In the dead of night Jean Valjean wrenches out a couple of bars from the window of his cell, and quietly walks home.

Upon arriving at his house, he finds that his housekeeper, the creature of habit, has hung up the door-key upon the usual nail. Upon entering also he finds that the faithful creature has placed his candlestick in the usual place upon the usual table. He mounts to his sleeping apartment.

We hope that now his escape is assured, but Javert, attracted by the light filtering through the window-blinds, runs the fugitive to earth. He enters the house in turn.

Now it is that the recapture of Jean Valjean seems to be absolutely certain. The heart of the reader sinks as the sinister police-inspector ascends to the sleeping apartment, notwithstanding that the housekeeper had declared that she had not seen her master enter.

The old woman below had only a few minutes earlier admitted to the house the excellent Sister of Mercy who had been present at the death of Fantine. She had come secretly at night, hoping to learn some details about the good man arrested in the infirmary that day.

The housekeeper had left this good Sister with

her master upstairs. She was one whose whole life had been open and above-board, a woman who looked upon a lie as a most deadly sin, and who had never told an untruth in the course of her blameless existence.

This good Sister, when Javert enters, has Jean Valjean's fate in her hands. He is hidden in the shade of a dark corner, the candle has been blown out, and the room remains only lighted by some smouldering embers as she advances to meet the police-inspector.

Without flinching, the Sister tells two lies in succession, in reply to Javert's questions.

No, she had not seen Jean Valjean since the death scene in the infirmary. Again ; no, she had not the slightest idea of where he could possibly be hiding at that moment.

In his respect for authority, whether religious or lay, Javert never doubted the Sister's assertions. He accepted unquestioningly her words as being true, bowed his head respectfully and withdrew.

As Jean Valjean effects his escape, the two falsehoods of the Sister of Charity are borne up to heaven as a holy burden by the Recording Angel.

With the conclusion of this thrilling episode, Victor Hugo may be considered as having attained the first culminating climax of his wonderful book. There are many more, and while the pathos attending the career of Jean Valjean, a career full of wonderful adventure, is never absent, we are introduced to new characters whose vicissitudes are almost equally interesting. We have Cosette, who is saved from her terrible existence by Jean Valjean, followed step by step from childhood until after her marriage ; we have her lover, of whom the same noble-hearted man is the preserver, carried by him for miles through the sewers of Paris, after being shot down fighting at the barricades ; we have the Thénardiers and their life of

crime, which in the case of one of the daughters is redeemed from its baseness by the sublime self-sacrifice of unrequited love ; again, there is Gavroche, the street *gamin*, a most delightful little rascal who is a wonderfully human character, brought up to vice yet practising the highest virtues by his protection of other little urchins younger than himself, and the nobility with which he gives his fearless young life while in the bitterest street fighting, gathering up the cartridges of his foes to serve them out to his friends.

In this epitome we have omitted the mention of many tragic instances recorded in the lives—and deaths—of lion-hearted students and despicable street robbers. Enough, however, has been recorded to shew the genius of the author of that most remarkable and pathetic romance, *Les Misérables*.

CHAPTER IX

ADÈLE HUGO AND SAINTE-BEUVE

We have made mention earlier in these pages of the marriage of Victor Hugo to Adèle Foucher, which took place on October 12th, 1822, and related also the sad fact that, owing to his passionate attachment to the young girl whom his brother married, Eugène Hugo lost his senses and had to be confined in the madhouse of Charenton.

At the time of the marriage we find that Victor's father, the general, in his announcement made to his friends, speaking of his son, described him simply as M. Victor-Marie Hugo. A few years later, however, on the occasion of the birth of one of his sons, we find the author attributing to himself the title of Baron :

" Mme. la baronne Victor Hugo est heureusement accouchée d'un garçon.

" M. le baron Victor Hugo a l'honneur de vous en faire part.

" La mère et l'enfant se portent bien.

" Paris, 21 Octobre, 1828."

In a study of the poet's career we fail to discover the occasion upon which he attained this title, which was not borne by his father or elder brothers.

Subsequently, during the reign of Louis Philippe, owing to his political activities, Victor contrived to

get himself appointed to the Chamber of Peers. It is then possible that he had conferred upon him the title of Vicomte, although we have seen no mention of that circumstance. Nor in the reign of the earlier kings would that title have been considered sufficiently high to constitute its holder a peer of France.

However, in one of the numerous letters of Juliette Drouet written to her lover, the great author, in a playfully sarcastic vein, we have seen a laughing mention of his coat-of-arms with its peer's mantle, and at the same time of his *vicomté*.

If Victor Hugo ever possessed either of these titles, we never find him mentioned by them on the front page of his works or in any of the books dealing with his life and career. To any ancient nobility the family of Hugo will appear to have had no claim, while in the matter of coats-of-arms the poet would have seemed to have pleased himself, since he certainly varied them at different epochs of his existence. His father was the possessor of a very grand coat-of-arms, accorded to him, not by any ancient Heralds' College, but by Joseph Bonaparte, in Spain. Of this coat, if he ever bore it, the son evidently grew tired, since in a work by M. Gustave Larroumet we find the following criticism : " Did he not, for that matter, make himself Vicomte and accord himself the arms of the family of Hugo of Lorraine, which are azure, a chief argent charged with two martlets sable." In another work we find Victor mentioned as bearing this coat with a chief or, instead of a chief argent, and with the addition of a griffin as crest.

Concerning this the author remarks in a footnote : " In reality, the poet often modified his arms, and added charges to them with extreme fantasy."

With reference to the family from whence he sprung, we know that his father came from Lorraine ;

nevertheless, in writing about the battle of Waterloo we find Victor making a kind of claim to belong to that family from which the celebrated farm of Hougomont, on the battlefield, took its name.

All of these little vanities, while they in no way enhanced the grandeur of Victor, evidently pleased him while doing harm to no one else. As, after the fall of Louis Philippe, he became a Republican in his feelings and took, moreover, an active part in the administration of the affairs of the Second Republic, it is probable that he then shed his titles with his former Royalist ideas, which ideas, by the way, had never diminished his great admiration for the first Napoleon.

To return to the subject of his marriage to his Adèle, the sole object of his adoration not only at the time of his marriage but for long after. When writing of his wife to his father he called her his "angelic Adèle," and his life with her continued to be a happy one for a period of nearly ten years. Although during this time there was harmony in the household and mutual confidence between husband and wife, the latter would seem to have been an unimaginative woman upon whom Victor in no manner relied for any sympathetic assistance in his literary career. If, however, Adèle was no genius, she was a charming companion in other ways, although the youthful charm of feature which had made her appear beautiful at the time of her marriage, hardly proved enduring, but seemed inclined, after but a few years, to fade into the dull and commonplace.

As a wife, however, Adèle did her duty, and she presented the romantic author with four children in succession in the ten years between 1822 and 1832. Of these a girl, Leopoldine, was the eldest. She was followed by two boys, Charles-Victor and François-

Victor, while the fourth child was Adèle, a second girl, named after her mother.

While thus all was happy in the home, Victor's brain had proved itself equally prolific and profitable, and he had made his mark in the world. Poems, plays, and prose productions had come tumbling out from the printing press as fast as his pen could write them, and his rate of production was most extraordinary.

The most remarkable of the poems were the second part of *Odes et Ballades*, *Les Feuilles d'Automne*, and *Les Orientales*, this last-named production proving to the world that Victor Hugo was in truth the greatest master of verse ever yet seen in France.

Of plays, he produced *Cromwell*, a more or less impossible tragedy written in the style of the Romantic school. Though not easy to act, this piece displayed the author's genius in a high degree and established him at the head of the writers of the new style. The next was his five-act drama, *Hernani*, his first great histrionic success, and, after *Hernani*, came *Marion Delorme*, the most charming of his plays. *Le Roi s'amuse* appeared for one night only in 1832, while *Lucrèce Borgia* and *Mary Tudor* were acted in the following year.

Among the prose works which came from Victor's pen during this period of connubial happiness was that most picturesque book, supposed to be written in simulation of the style of Sir Walter Scott, *Notre Dame de Paris*.

During this time of intense literary activity, which brought with it financial success, the young author had not many friends among the male sex. Men thought that he gave himself airs and had too much pose. This attitude went down with women very well, and notably the actresses, who were only too ready to make up to him from interested reasons, but his male

acquaintances, as a rule, liked his manner as little as they did his style in fancy waistcoats. For they considered the taste in dress of the poet abominable.

One friend, however, Victor had, who was his intimate companion. He was a man of great attainments, whose literary criticisms we still read with the greatest pleasure and interest to-day.

This friend, Sainte-Beuve, was as much at home in Hugo's house as he was himself. Probably more so, for the duties of a dramatic author in those days continually required his presence at the theatre where his pieces were in preparation or in course of representation. He was always very friendly with Victor's wife, of whose youngest child, Adèle, he was the godfather, and who always welcomed him cordially to her house.

The intimacy between Victor Hugo and Sainte-Beuve, who was himself a poet as well as a literary critic, began in the year 1827, when Victor had been married for about five years. It was then that a favourable criticism of the second instalment of *Odes et Ballades* caused the author to seek out and thank the critic. The critic displayed a degree of homage and admiration to his visitor which gratified the *amour propre* of the latter, with the result that he unbent from a stiffness,which was at times more or less assumed, to display the charm of manner which always captivated when he let himself go. The pair, Sainte-Beuve and Victor Hugo, became friends, and were from that time to be seen constantly in each other's company, while the critic always found his cover ready laid at the poet's table.

If Sainte-Beuve commenced practically to live with the Hugos, where he became as one of the family, it must be admitted that in a measure he paid his way. For his powerful pen was always at his friend's service,

an advantage to which Hugo was by no means blind. It is sometimes well worth while to be able to keep your own tame critic on the premises, and especially one who has the press of a great city like Paris at his command, and is ready upon the appearance of each fresh publication to fall at the feet of the author and offer up a pæan of praise.

This is what Sainte-Beuve did where Victor's works were concerned. According to a contemporary writer, he praised them up outrageously, beyond all measure. To those who are acquainted with the lucidity and agreeable flow of Sainte-Beuve's writings, it will be easy to understand how, with the works of a man of real genius to comment upon, he would be able to raise a resonant shout of admiration certain to compel the echoing applause of an expectant public.

It has pleased some French writers to display a singular hatred of Sainte-Beuve, to find fault with, indeed, sneer at, his personal appearance; to decry his moral character, while laying the finger upon those of his amorous peccadilloes of which they have been able to unearth the record. One author devotes many pages to his depreciation, not even neglecting to accuse the critic of poltroonery for having hidden under a false name in order to avoid rendering personal service in the National Guard at the time of the daily *émeutes* in the streets in the year 1830. He calls Sainte-Beuve "ugly, treacherous, hypocritical, cowardly, and indiscreet."

Now what is the cause of all this virulent abuse of a young Parisian whose morals were probably no better and no worse than those of the other inhabitants of the gay city in his day?

The cause of it is that Sainte-Beuve fell in love with Victor Hugo's wife, who apparently returned his affection whole-heartedly. It is on account of his

having alienated Adèle's love from her husband and thus ruined his friend's happiness in his home, that Sainte-Beuve has earned all this obloquy. Further, that his conduct was even far worse than indiscreet is evident from the fact that he had subsequently the effrontery to publish a book of love poems, in which Victor Hugo's wife is plainly designated as the object of his adoration. In the pages of his *Livre d'Amour* Sainte-Beuve has even the bad taste to address the woman whom he has beguiled from her husband by her Christian name—to call her his tender lamb—"Adèle! tendre agneau!" He talks about "her jealous lion," and dwells complacently upon the cunning tricks, the ruses, which she successfully employs to baffle this deceived spouse :

"Tu retrouvais toujours quelque ruse inouïe
Pour te garder fidèle au timide vainqueur
Qui ne veut et n'aura rien de toi que ton cœur."

In his *Livre d'Amour* Sainte-Beuve does not even scruple to make mention of the name of the hotel in which he and his friend's wife were in the habit of having their secret meetings. The strange thing is that Madame Hugo, who never left the protection of her husband's home until she died, on no occasion shewed the slightest signs of resentment with her boasting lover for thus openly celebrating her charms, while giving to the world the story of her infidelity.

That Victor Hugo was himself aware of his friend's passion for his wife is evident, and also that, in the earlier days, at all events, he only looked upon the circumstance as a cause of regret upon Sainte-Beuve's own account, for whom he expressed his commiseration. When writing to him at the end of the year 1830, he tells him that "the sad disturbance will pass." He then also adds that Sainte-Beuve is to come and see

MADAME VICTOR HUGO.

[*Facing p.* 72.

him often, when he will not find that he has a better friend than himself.

Later, all this confidence is gone, and it is sad to find Victor Hugo, in July, 1831, putting it on record that his happiness has been destroyed. He now evidently knows not only of his friend's attachment for his wife, but that it is reciprocated by the Adèle whom he could never have imagined could have proved fickle, and whom he had formerly loved with every fibre of his poetic soul. At this time he writes as follows: "I have acquired the certainty that it was possible that that which had all my love could cease to love me."

As might have been imagined, the friendship of Victor Hugo and Sainte-Beuve came to an end. Not, however, for years to come that of this latter and Adèle, nor was that friendship concealed from her father, aunts, and other relations, with some of whom we find Sainte-Beuve occasionally staying in her company. Not that by this time Victor cared in the least with whom his wife should pass her leisure moments, or in what manner she should seek amusement.

CHAPTER X

JULIETTE DROUET

THERE are some few writers who, like M. Gustave Simon, in his *Roman de Sainte-Beuve*, represent the connection which existed for so long between Adèle Hugo and the critic to have been merely a matter of pure sentimentality.

It is, of course, quite possible that such may have been the case, but apparently that was not the view taken of the situation by Adèle's husband. If it were so, where, then, is the validity of the excuse offered for Victo Hugo in the new ties that he formed in a connection that lasted for fifty years with another woman ?

No, the exoneration to be found for Victor exists in his conviction in there being something more than a sentimental friendship for another man on the part of the Adèle whom he had loved so tenderly and for so long. Otherwise, his whole nature could not have so completely changed. He could not possibly, while continuing to keep one home for the wife whom he treated as a cypher, at the same time have been as often as not himself living with one who loved him deeply in another house a few streets away.

It is evident that something good died in Hugo's nature when he became assured of the deception of Adèle. Until that moment he was rectitude itself. After it he himself appeared to have forgotten the

meaning of the word " fidelity," and proved repeatedly that he could not even remain faithful to the devoted creature who gave him the whole of her life, whose one and only thought was how to make him happy.

Of this woman it is now the time to speak

Born in 1806, in the town of Fougères, in Brittany, a little girl named Julienne Gauvain was left an orphan before she was two years old. An uncle, who was quite a young man when retired from Napoleon's armies on account of his wounds, took the baby girl to live with him. His name was René Henri Drouet, and at the age of thirty-two, after eight glorious campaigns, he lived on a small pension while serving in the garrison artillery. His niece took his name of Drouet, while her name of Julienne was also changed to Juliette.

After giving the little girl a very happy existence during her early childhood's days, Lieutenant Drouet took her to be educated to a convent in Paris, in which he had a sister and a cousin among the nuns. This convent, the Bernardines-Bénédictines de l'Adoration Perpétuelle, in the Rue du Petit-Picpus, was the home of the most severe order in France. Victor Hugo made its name famous throughout the world in the pages of *Les Misérables*. To it, after a most sensational escape from the galleys, to which he had been re-committed after recapture, he conducts Jean Valjean, who takes thither with him little Cosette, whom he has rescued from the clutches of the vile Thénardiers. The book must be read in order to follow the thrilling series of adventures by which Jean Valjean gains access to the convent, establishes himself as its gardener, and consigns poor Fantine's daughter to the care of the black-veiled nuns.

Having formed an intimate connection with Juliette Drouet, it was from her mouth that Hugo obtained the

description of the terrible severities of the Convent of the Rue du Petit-Picpus. The scenes witnessed within its walls were such as to strike terror into the heart of the doughty Jean Valjean, when, in the course of one of his most dramatic escapes from Javert, and while taking Cosette with him, he peered at night through one of the narrow, barred windows. What, then, must have been the effect upon the little girl, Juliette Drouet, when she first beheld its phantom nuns with black veils, its padlocked gratings, bare stone halls without any fires, dark corridors and gloomy chapels, upon the cold floors of which might be seen the figure of a woman lying for hours at a time, face downwards and with arms outstretched in the form of a cross.

Childhood, however, will accustom itself to anything, and being the niece of one of the religious mothers, Juliette became the pet of the nuns and received a good education. She was, however, it must be owned, but a naughty little girl at times, who horrified the inhabitants of the convent by her pranks.

Such was, for instance, the case one day, when she left lying on the stones in front of the confessional box the following written confession : " My father, I accuse myself of having been avaricious ; I accuse myself of having committed adultery ; my father, I accuse myself of raising my eyes towards the gentlemen."

In the convent Juliette learned to sing ; she also learned in a measure how to behave herself in good society, a number of ladies having taken up their residence in an annexe of the convent, which ladies this spoilt child was allowed to visit. Other accomplishments, such as painting in water-colours, were taught to the child, who was even allowed the especial privilege of having a celebrated young painter named Redouté to give her lessons.

With all these advantages, the youthful Juliette

Drouet began to think of that life which she heard of without the walls more than was good for a girl whom her aunt and cousin calculated upon turning into a nun like themselves. Thus it came to pass that when one day, some time after she had reached the age of sixteen, she was asked by the visiting Archbishop of Paris if she felt a calling for the religious life, Juliette ventured boldly to answer, "No."

That evening, or next day, Juliette was compelled to leave the convent. Her uncle took her over again into his charge upon her leaving the sacred building, but after that date Juliette has left no confidences to explain where or in what manner she passed her life for a period of several years.

The next we hear of Juliette Drouet is in the studio of the famous sculptor, James Pradier, among his so-called pupils. As a matter of fact, Pradier had made his model and also his mistress of Juliette, who had developed into a beautiful young woman, and by him she became, in 1826, the mother of a daughter, who was baptised with the name of Claire.

The sculptor Pradier was a very grand person in the world of art, being a member of the Institute, Professor of the School of the Beaux Arts, Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur, and so on. As a man, however, he was but a lamentable specimen, always talking largely, promising wildly, boasting of what he could or would do, and accomplishing nothing. His promises, his professions were simply laughed at or jeered at by those who knew him; they imposed, though, owing to his grandiloquent manner, upon those who were unacquainted with the shallowness of his character. Thus he had imposed upon Juliette, and no doubt made her promises in which the poor young girl believed.

Having accomplished her seduction and rendered

her a mother, Pradier failed to behave like an honourable man and marry her, by which means her child would have been legitimatised, or to properly take care of either Juliette or the little Claire. Not, however, being wholly bad-hearted, Pradier was much exercised in his mind as to what he could do for Juliette in order to aid her to earn a living. When it occurred to him that the stage would open up a promising career for a young woman with so much beauty, Pradier sent Juliette off to Brussels, to study for the theatre, he being in relation with various persons, professional and otherwise, in that city.

No sooner, however, was Juliette established in the Belgian city, where she passed for a time as the daughter of the Madame Girandier with whom she made her home, than we find Pradier writing to her abominable advice under the guise of hints to a young débutante as to how to establish herself and prosper on the stage. The suggestions that he makes to the girl whom he has ruined of the manner in which she is to employ the guile of her coquetry with all the bigwigs of the theatre are nauseous in the extreme. Pradier impresses upon Juliette that not to repel the attentions of those who can be of use to her is essential if a young actress wishes for advancement. He is careful, however, to add that he does not mean to suggest that Juliette need go too far, but what is necessary is to encourage the hopes of those who make up to her, so that they may maintain an interest in her, and in this way she will get on.

It was in the month of February, 1829, that Juliette made a prosperous début upon the stage at Brussels, whereupon we find Pradier writing and thanking Providence for her success. He was given to writing in a religious manner, for James Pradier, had he not

been a sculptor, might well have become a popular preacher, being fond of big words.

It is grotesque to find him almost at the same time as he writes suggesting to Juliette the advisability of trying to lure men on also troubling himself about the affairs of her soul, in the style that follows :

" Your letter consoles me and commences to give me the hope that you are changed. You will find the recompense of your sorrows and conversion. Perseverance leads those who do not neglect it to its goal. He who enters into the way of good living is happy, with it he surmounts all obstacles ; be sure of that ! "

Pradier thanked heaven that Juliette had obtained an engagement at Brussels, and advised her to stay there, the fact being that he was afraid that she might be in some measure on his hands should she return to Paris. Juliette would not, however, consent to remain for ever separated from her little Claire, who had remained in the French capital, and went at this time by her father's name of Pradier. She obtained an opportunity of returning to Paris with the former theatre proprietor, Félix Harel, and his famous companion, Mademoiselle George. The former, who had been a Préfet in the time of the Empire, had been exiled for political reasons, but when the Government of Charles X. proclaimed some amnesties, his name was among the number.

With Harel and the great actress, accordingly, Juliette recrossed the frontier, and almost at once Harel employed her to play at his theatre of the Porte Saint-Martin. Her success as an actress was from the first assured, and Harel continued to give Juliette rôle after rôle when he became the proprietor also of the Théatre de l'Odéon.

It may, however, be placed on record that at no time in her theatrical career did it fall to the lot of

Juliette to fill any of the epoch-making rôles. These, while she remained with Félix Harel, were always apportioned to the lot of Mademoiselle George or her celebrated rival, Madame Dorval. If later she never attained to the most prominent position on the Parisian stage, and even relinquished the theatre altogether at an early age, the reason is to be found in the jealousy of Victor Hugo.

At the time that Juliette was to be seen acting in play after play at one theatre after another, she was undoubtedly one of the most beautiful women in Paris. Théophile Gautier has left us a description of her which shews her as attractive and alluring :

" The head of Madame Juliette is of a regular and delicate beauty, which makes it more apt for the smiles of comedy than the convulsions of tragedy ; the nose is pure, clear cut, with a good profile—the eyes limpid and like diamonds, the mouth of a humid and vivacious carmine, and it remains very small even in the excess of the giddiest gaiety."

After continuing to expatiate upon the beauty of her features one by one, and dwelling upon the glories of her raven-black hair, the brilliant writer dwells upon Juliette's attractions of form :

" The neck, shoulders, and arms are of a perfection that is quite antique ; she might worthily inspire the sculptors, and be admitted to the competition for beauty with the young Athenian women who let fall their veils before Praxiteles meditating his Venus."

The life of the actress in the Paris of those days was one full of temptations. Obliged to live largely and to be dressed in the mode when off the stage, when on it the contract of engagement usually contained the clause that an actress was to provide her own stage dresses. To meet all this expense the salaries paid were not sufficient. The result was that

when the inevitable protector appeared to offer his assistance, his attentions were not refused. A giddy life, free from care was the result, during which the name of any actress of note would be heard associated with that of first one person of repute or means and then with that of another.

The early education of Juliette Drouet in the studio of Pradier, and the later counsels impressed upon her by the same evil genius upon her first entry into her career as an actress at Brussels, were not calculated to make her more rigid in her mode of life than her stage companions. The result was that her name was associated in turn with that of different well-known people, including the novelist, Alphonse Karr. After various changes of protectors, she had become the companion of a very rich and generous Russian prince of the name of Demidoff, who had furnished for Juliette a splendid suite of rooms in which she was living in the height of luxury.

From the lightness of her mode of living the young girl brought up so religiously in the convent of the Rue Petit-Picpus, would now appear to have embarked upon the downward course ; there did not seem to be any hope of a return from the voyage upon which she was drifting to the island of Cythera. Endowed with beauty, lively and sprightly, light-hearted to a degree, a lovelight in her beautiful eye which was allowed to fall in turn upon any chance companion, where should she find the anchor which she could throw overboard to arrest her progress to the dangerous rocks of that breaker-encircled coast ? Fortunately, the anchor was at hand in the person of one whose own love career had been shattered. Victor Hugo was to prove her anchor for life.

CHAPTER XI

JULIETTE AND VICTOR

At about the time when he and Juliette Drouet were to meet, in appearance Victor Hugo was an agreeable looking young man, remarkable especially for one characteristic, which was an enormous brow. Of this monumental brow it was the delight of the caricaturists to make exaggerated pictures, while of it he himself was very proud. According to the evidence of Juliette, at the time that she first knew him he was in the habit of brushing his hair back from his forehead in a manner that she found unbecoming in the highest degree. A portrait of Victor in oils by Gavarni is reproduced in his book on Hugo and Juliette by Louis Guimbaud. It gives us the picture of an effeminate-looking young man, with rather narrow but pleasant dark eyes, a large, regular nose and a weak, agreeable, but sensual, mouth. The mode of wearing the brushed-back profusion of dark hair is distinctly womanish. This femininity of appearance fortunately does not continue in portraits taken at a later date, in which the mouth also changes, the lips becoming gripped and generally firmer in appearance, which is an improvement.

Hugo's mode of dressing was such as to appear a dandy according to the mode of the day, but it does not seem that his dandyism was ever up to date, but always a year or two behind the times, the poetic young man being devoid of natural taste.

While men complained of the pride of Victor Hugo, and especially of the fact that while never listening to others, he always talked about himself, women found in him a charming companion, as he treated them with a flattering deference which was particularly pleasing when coming from one of such acknowledged genius.

On their part, those of the sex were always ready to meet him more than half-way; they spoilt him with their adulation and threw themselves at his head. Juliette Drouet never ceased to burn incense before Victor and to worship him as a demi-god from 1833 until the year 1883.

In his youthful days the inclinations of Victor were distinctly religious in tendency, while his moral ideas were on a higher plane than those of the companions of his age. Of this moral austerity Hugo shewed an example in the single-mindedness of his love for Adèle. Actresses he avoided as much as possible; he distrusted them and had no use for their noisy, forward ways, of which he had more than a sample from one of the leading ladies when he was bringing out his play, *Hernani,* at the Théatre-Français.

A story to illustrate the modesty of Victor where actresses were concerned is told in *Victor Hugo, Related by a Witness of His Life,* of which book the incidents are supposed to have been dictated by him to his wife.

The young author was taken by a friend to a supper-party given by Mdlles. Duchesnois and Emilie Leverd. The former especially was extremely *décolletée,* a fact which put Victor very much out of countenance. Being much amused at his shocked expression, the pair of saucy *artistes* made up to him in the most playful and forward manner, employing "*mille agaceries*" in their onslaught. Victor was glad to make his escape from the company of the half-naked

actresses, but was still next day suffering from the shock to his nerves. So much was this the case that his conscience was aroused, and he hurried off to confess himself to his old friend, the Abbé Lamennais. The big sin which he had on his mind was apparently nothing more serious than the *agaceries* made to him by the two lively stars of the stage.

At the time when Hugo, in the year 1833, was about to bring out his play, *Lucrèce Borgia*, it was not possible to offer the leading part to Juliette, but she is said to have herself caused the author to be informed that she would be content with a minor rôle. She was accordingly offered, and accepted, that of the Princesse Negroni. At this period she shone and dazzled with an air of brilliant youth. Her face is said to have presented a charming image of calm and purity, her eyes were velvety and their glance soft and alluring. Despite all this beauty, these attractions, although Victor Hugo came under their spell from the first time that he met Juliette at the rehearsals, he distrusted her, was afraid of her seductions and would by no means allow to transpire the feelings with which she inspired him.

She, however, whether from a violent attraction towards him or from the pique which she experienced at his attitude of distrust and aloofness towards actresses in general, played the coquette with Victor. There is no doubt but that Juliette made the advances, employing all her womanly wiles to win to her side the author of the piece during the repetitions.

It is possible that she was genuinely in love from the first time that she beheld Victor ; one thing is certain, and that is that she was anxious that he should love her.

One of the chroniclers of the author was his brother-in-law, M. Paul Chenay, the husband of Adèle's sister.

While rather spiteful in his narration, especially where Juliette is concerned, Chenay is at times quite entertaining in his *Victor Hugo à Guernesey*. He relates that in the green room of the theatre Juliette complained openly of Hugo's disdain of the *artistes*, and applied to the critic, Gustave Planche, who happened to be present, for advice as to how to overcome his disconcerting aloofness, which was humiliating to all self-respecting actresses.

The answer of Planche was amusing: "It is necessary publicly to untie his shoe-laces, then to take off his shoes and kiss his feet with admiration."

After quoting the critic's lively sally, Paul Chenay spitefully continues: "I have never known for certain if that is how the first interview really took place."

It was naturally upon Mademoiselle George that had devolved the title rôle of *Lucrèce Borgia*, the piece appearing at the Theatre Porte-Saint-Martin, which belonged to her protector, Harel. The part assigned to Juliette, that of the Princesse Negroni, was, if but secondary, one calculated to give to the *artiste* presenting it sufficient scope for distinction in the method of its presentment. Above all, the extremely handsome dress and tall ostrich plumes of the princess were admirably calculated to enhance the charms of the beautiful woman fulfilling the rôle.

Juliette proved a success in her part and had a most flattering reception. Flattering also was the encomium of Théophile Gautier: "Upon the little rôle of the Princess Negroni Mme. Juliette cast the brightest radiance. She had but few words to say and was but a short time on the scene. With so little time and so few words she found the means to create a ravishing figure, a real Italian princess, with a gracious but mortal smile, with eyes filled with perfidious intoxication, a fresh and rosy face which has just shed

its glass mask of a poisoner; so charming, moreover, that one forgets to pity the unfortunate *convives* and finds them happy to die after having kissed her beautiful hands."

It was fortunate for Juliette that in later days she was able to console herself with the remembrance of having appeared in this very successful play of Hugo's, for the one which followed, *Mary Tudor*, in which she also figured, was a dead failure and hissed off the stage, both Mlle. George and Juliette coming in for their share of the disfavour resulting partly from the badness of the piece, partly from an organised opposition.

So fortunate, however, was the production of *Lucrèce*, that Harel was able to write to its author that the takings at the door for the first month of its run had amounted to the sum of ninety thousand francs.

It was upon the top of this success of his play, a success which brought with it much glory to Victor Hugo, that there ensued for him another success, this time in the flowery fields of love.

The dramatic author and poet had discovered that there existed in the world a woman in whom he could find solace for his woes, balm for his heart, all —or more than all—that he had lost with the faithless Adèle. Juliette, for her part, had recognised that she had discovered the man of her dreams, for whom she was ready to surrender all beside. From the time of this mutual discovery of each other's heart at the end of February, 1833, Victor and Juliette became as one. It was no case of a temporary passion, a fleeting caprice, upon either side, but the commencement of the union upon earth of two souls to endure as long as life should last—for throughout no less than half a century this intimate association endured.

JULIETTE DROUET ABOUT 1832.
From the lithograph by Léon Noël.

[*Facing p* 86.

Of the two who had thrown themselves into each other's arms with transports of equal passion, it would be found, however, as the years rolled on, that it was the woman who had given the most, who had given up the most also. Body, soul, every thought of her brain, absolute fidelity, devotion, self-effacement, the abandonment of her career to please the man she loved; nothing was too much for Juliette to bring to his feet. Nor did she ever change, unless it were to find out and give something more, such as the labour of her hands to copy his verses, his manuscripts. To mend his clothes, or make them, became and remained for her nothing but a joy, a sacred duty; she found that matters such as these were absolutely disregarded in his home; hers, then, should be the hands to attend to them.

In the early days of their mutual happiness, Victor, with his mind upon his beloved, completely changed his ordinary habits. Whereas he had been regular and methodical in the highest degree, he now lost all method. He forgot his home, he forgot his guests, he forgot his appointments, he forgot his dinner. He was, indeed, very much in love, and constantly kept his eye upon the clock until at the earliest possible moment he could rush off to the happy meeting-place at No. 19, Boulevard de Saint-Denis. In his pocket he would carry off to his inamorata a copy of love verses, often scribbled by him in the midst of a roomful of people. Nothing delighted Juliette more than one of her lover's poems written in this way, to prove that no matter by how many he might be surrounded, his thoughts were of her alone.

She, on her side, from the very beginning of their union commenced to write him the letters of which, while thousands more have been discovered since, at least six thousand were found in existence at the time

of her death and that of Victor Hugo. Every one almost of these was a love-letter. At first she wrote them to please herself, and afterwards continued to do so at his request. Sometimes she wrote to her lover as many as six letters in one day. They would be placed in the corner of her room on a table, or, when in the country, in a hole in a hollow tree. When he came to see her he read them, or he took them out of the tree when it was their trysting-place in the woods. Much as she wished to do so, never would Victor allow Juliette to destroy these letters.

Very pretty and tender is Juliette's language in these early days : " From the moment that I have told you that I love you, all is yours—my body, my soul, my whole life ; to belong to you is a triumph for me as much as for you. Far from refusing you coquettishly any corner of myself, I would be more beautiful to give you more. I would reunite in myself the charms of all women, not from vanity but to give you pleasure. Never shall I put any glory in resisting you but in belonging to you, in seeing you happy. When I shall have given you all, I shall complain, not of having given you all but because I shall have nothing left to give. Search, imagine, invent delight, that I can create for you and I shall be the one to thank you."

Juliette writes at first disparagingly of herself. She fears that her sentences are not sufficiently well-turned to be addressed to such a literary genius. " It is not my fault if I have a heart in the place of wit and love in the place of style."

Again, when she is alone at the theatre for a second, she finds the time to scratch a little line : " I am all by myself and instantly I write to you. I love you, I admire you, and I adore you, and then I love you all over again. My heart contains nothing but that."

If upon one occasion she complains to her love-that she "loves with intemperance," and that in consequence she cannot help it if her words all go wrong, we think that the intemperance is such that even the strictest grammarian, were he but beloved by Juliette, would forgive it readily.

CHAPTER XII

THE REDEMPTION OF JULIETTE

THERE were several causes for the crash which attended the first night's performance of Victor Hugo's *Mary Tudor*, the chief of which was the undue impatience of Félix Harel, which resulted in his hustling the author to hurry in writing the piece. While *Lucrèce Borgia* was still running with every sign of a continued success, Harel, for some unknown reason, wished to take the piece off and replace it by another. He asked Hugo to deliver him a new play at once, saying that it had been promised. Victor refused in a personal interview which resulted in a quarrel. Thereupon Harel wrote and challenged the dramatist to fight him.

Hugo had accepted the challenge and was starting to look for a couple of friends to serve as his seconds in the duel, when, going down the street, he fell right into the arms of the theatre manager. Félix Harel instantly apologised to Hugo, and pointed out to him that they would be but a couple of fools to try to cut each others' throats when their interests lay in working together.

The pair of friends embraced, and Victor promised the new play as soon as possible, but it was written on the spur of the moment and without due reflection. The title, which was first of all *Mary of England*, was changed to *Mary Tudor* before it was read over to the assembled *artistes* at the Porte-Saint-Martin Theatre in August, 1833.

It happened, unfortunately, that a short time before the piece was ready for the stage a friend of Hugo's had brought about an ill-advised quarrel between him and Alexandre Dumas, by means of a newspaper attack on the latter. The result was that on the night of the first performance, which was November 6, the house was crowded with a gang of the supporters of Dumas assembled with the intention of making a hostile demonstration.

This attack proved absolutely successful, hisses succeeded hisses from the opening of the piece. Unfortunately, instead of playing in a manner calculated to retrieve the situation, Juliette in the rôle of Jane, went all to pieces ; she was evidently not up to her part.

The description of this unfortunate night given in *Victor Hugo, Related by a Witness of His Life*, refers to the disaster as follows : " Mdlle. George was not spared, her imprecation against London was violently attacked, and the grand final scene between the two women was hissed from one end to the other."

The attack upon the unhappy Juliette had been so particularly savage that she neither herself had the nerve to attempt her part again nor did those connected with the production of the piece think that it would be wise for her to do so.

Accordingly Juliette Drouet was replaced in the part of Jane by Mdlle. Ida Ferrier, an actress who was the intimate friend of Alexandre Dumas and whom he afterwards married. It was given out that it was owing to the grave indisposition of Madame Juliette that she was unable to continue to fulfil her engagement.

With this substitution of her talented comrade for herself in the part of Jane, the organised opposition on the part of the friends of Alexandre Dumas appears to

have been withdrawn. Nevertheless, *Mary Tudor* was never a piece to become popular as had *Lucrèce Borgia ;* it had been scratched together in far too much of a hurry to be good work.

With this failure the stage career of Juliette came to an end. Although upon her relinquishing her engagement at the Porte-Saint-Martin she was accorded a *pension* of three thousand francs a year and became one of the permanent staff of the Comédie-Française ; during a period of two years she was never allotted a rôle at that theatre. Her disappointment was great, and the more so as she was deeply in debt and was quite unable to pay off her numerous creditors, who commenced to harry her for payment.

She was living in an expensive flat in the Rue de l'Echiquier, and having ceased her connection with the generous Demidoff when she fell in love with Hugo, had no longer an unlimited purse to draw upon wherewith to keep up its expenses. Unfortunately, Juliette, who was reckoning upon a continuation of good theatrical engagements, did not at first recognise the necessity for economy. She liked to have things pretty about her, and, especially as she was anxious to have a beautiful home in which to receive her dramatist-lover, her pride was concerned in his finding her in a coquettish and luxurious *milieu.*

When money ceased to come in, she borrowed what she could and had at first no difficulty in so doing from her various tradesmen, who made fictitious charges in their bills while charging usurious interest upon the borrowed sums.

When it dawned upon her numerous creditors that in the once substantial Juliette they now had only a broken reed to lean upon, they fell upon her all together. As writ succeeded writ, and the writs were followed by the bailiffs to seize her furniture, the condition of

the young actress became pitiable. She had carefully avoided telling Victor Hugo anything about her distress, for she knew that he had a household of his own upon his hands, and, moreover, that his mind ran in an economical groove. For nothing in the world would Juliette have her Victor aware of the large amount of her liabilities.

At length, however, the truth could no longer be concealed from her well-beloved, for others were aware of the state of affairs, and some of these, from a sheer desire to make mischief, informed Victor Hugo.

He became angry at the concealment that had been practised by Juliette; he was also violently jealous of her, when these kind friends informed him that she had been obtaining assistance elsewhere; that she had even applied to Pradier for help, who for that matter had replied with good advice. Among others who slandered Juliette at this time, and endeavoured to make trouble between her and Victor, were those old comrades of the theatre upon whose fidelity she should have been able to rely, Mdlle. George and Mdlle. Ida Ferrier, the latter of whom was, it appears, anxious to replace her in the good graces of Victor Hugo.

The result of all this spitefulness was that there were terrific quarrels between the lovers, many hard words passing.

Proud in the knowledge of her absolute fidelity in thought and deed, Juliette took up an attitude of injured innocence. She talked about suicide, and told Victor that the only alternative was that she should leave him to go his own way, since he appeared to mistrust her and to listen to unfounded calumnies against her absolute honesty and devotion to him, which would remain eternal.

Her language in her letters was both dignified and

pathetic, but after each scene of reconciliation—and there were many such—Victor listened to some new slanderer and recommenced his reproaches, which were quite unmerited.

In short, Victor Hugo did not behave well. At this juncture he shewed neither the dignity which would have prompted him to leave Juliette if he could not trust her, nor the generosity to help her out of her pecuniary difficulties. Juliette, for her part, however, had made up her mind, and on August 3, 1834, she left Paris for Brest, near which place she had an elder sister living.

No sooner had she left Paris than the lovers, who had bidden each other an eternal adieu, commenced to exchange the tenderest letters. Victor, after writing a letter full of remorse, in which letter, moreover, he promised to do his best to clear off for Juliette her most pressing liabilities, took the coach in turn and followed her, and in less than a week had brought her back with him to Paris.

Hugo proved as good as his word, but no more than that. He cleared off the most pressing debts, but left the others unpaid. Being now absolutely sure of Juliette's disinterested love for him, he put it to a strange test. He told her that the mode in which she could redeem her somewhat stormy past must be by self-denial, by a life of voluntary poverty, coupled with fidelity to himself.

Without hesitation, Juliette Drouet joyfully accepted the terms imposed. Her expensive flat was given up, such furniture and jewellery as she had left disposed of, and a very small *appartement*, consisting of two rooms and a kitchen, hired. Here she established herself. Her lodging, which was in the Rue de Paradis, was situated in the unfashionable quarter known as Le Marais. It was very cold, and

in order to save the expense of firewood Juliette preferred to pass more than half of her time in bed in the winter season. In this way she did not shake herself to pieces with the shivers. All of her pretty dresses were abandoned, as Victor lost no opportunity of informing her that a pretty toilette in no way added to the charms of a pretty woman. In short, that nature unadorned was adorned the most.

Wonderful to relate, the formerly coquettish actress not only accepted her penance cheerfully, but gloried in it. She wrote to Hugo: "My poverty, my heavy shoes, my dirty curtains, my iron spoons, the absence of every coquetry and every pleasure foreign from our love, bear witness every hour and every minute that I love you with every kind of love at the same time."

When not compelled by the freezing cold to keep between her blankets, Juliette continued her self-reformation by employing herself for the benefit of her arbitrary lover. In addition to doing her own housework and making her own dresses, she now constantly plied the needle to make undergarments for Victor, mend others, darn his socks.

A great portion of her time was passed with the pen. She would annotate and classify his manuscripts, and, above all, copy out his writings for him. When the usual immense length of Victor Hugo's works is taken into consideration, it must be admitted that this last-named task was a colossal one.

What cannot have made it any the easier was the fact that the handwriting of the author was not by any means an easy one to decipher, and the less so as it was often rendered almost illegible by numerous corrections and interlineations.

Did ever man find greater devotion in a woman?

Not all of Juliette's nice things had been seized by

her creditors nor sold by herself when the final crash had come in her affairs, for a good many articles had been pawned by her in the Mont-de-Piété. Although Victor Hugo did not redeem these articles for her at once, for his generosity did not go so far as that—he paid the interest owing and renewed the engagement of those things to which she particularly clung and which she did not wish to be sold. We are told, for instance, by M. Quimbaud that he preserved for her in this manner forty-eight embroidered serviettes, engaged for 240 francs ; forty-eight embroidered *chemises en batiste,* pawned for 500 francs ; and a cross in brilliants upon which 500 francs had been advanced. It is to be presumed that Juliette eventually recovered these effects after her period of reformation and redemption was considered to have been accomplished, and when she was no longer condemned by her taskmaster—and one might almost say father-confessor—to a life of self-abnegation and poverty in expiation of her past sins.

When it is recalled to mind that as the years rolled on Victor frequently, in the most heartless way, deceived the faithful Juliette with other women, the reflection arises that it is a pity that she was unable to compel him to do penance in turn. All that he had, however, to suffer from her were the well-merited reproaches caused by her jealousy.

CHAPTER XIII

LOVE IN THE COUNTRY

ALTHOUGH Victor indulged in such strange ideas concerning the necessity of a period of penance for the handsome young actress of whom he had made his *chère amie*, it must not be supposed that on that account he ceased to love her devotedly.

On the contrary, his passion for Juliette seemed if anything to increase, and he longed to make of her more and more the companion of his daily life in his hours of leisure, as well as the one to whom he could confide his literary aims and ambitions, and upon whose judgment he could rely.

He had always been fond of the country, and finding to his delight that Juliette shared his tastes, Victor arranged that they should together leave Paris in the summer-time to share the delights of sylvan retreats far away from the haunts of men in the busy city.

Juliette was all the more ready to fall in with the views of her Victor in this respect as in the city she was commencing to suffer more and more from boredom and solitude. Whereas formerly her life had been her own, so that she had been able to roam even as far as Italy at her own sweet will, now she had become a positive prisoner. So jealous had Hugo become of his fair companion that he insisted that she should never go out unless accompanied by him—no, not

even when she went to see her little daughter Claire. Although she gave way to his ridiculous wishes on this head, Juliette became a sufferer owing to them. Often she would be left for not hours only, but days alone, living in Paris but not of it, not even able to wander along the boulevards and look in the shop windows as a means of relief to the monotony of her existence. She might as well be in a nunnery.

She passed much of this time in learning up new rôles in the new plays which Victor Hugo had written, and she copied for him, and in which she vainly hoped to appear once more before the public. But although, after years of waiting, at length she obtained one engagement, which was to act in the play of *Ruy Blas* at the Théatre de la Renaissance, poor Juliette was doomed to a bitter disappointment. She was perfectly well aware that it was owing to Victor's jealousy of her that he was even jealous of her connection with the theatre. Thereupon, while apparently encouraging Juliette to learn up the parts that she hoped to be able to take in his new plays, he secretly managed so that they should invariably be allotted to some other actress when the plays were produced. In the case of *Ruy Blas,* which was the most famous of Hugo's plays after *Hernani,* Juliette had become, while copying out the piece, deeply interested in the part of Marie de Neubourg, a queen oppressed with melancholy owing to her being crushed with the weight of etiquette. Victor for once departed from his usual habit. Instead of putting a spoke in her wheel, he this time intervened on Juliette's behalf with his friend Anténor Joly, the director of the theatre, who in consequence actually signed the engagement giving to Juliette Drouet the hoped-for part.

In spite of this, that she never felt sure of her good fortune materialising is proved by a letter that she

wrote full of discouragement, in which occurred the following words : " Never shall I act the queen. My good fortune does not go so far. That which I most desire will not be realised."

Juliette had every reason for distrust ; in spite of her signed engagement, the rôle that she had been promised was withdrawn from her a day or two after she had written this letter. It was said that the cancelling of her engagement was due to the action of Madame Hugo, who personally called upon Anténor Joly and demanded of him that he should withdraw the part from the woman who had by this time been her husband's intimate friend for a period of more than five years. If this was true, what was the reason of this interference ? It can hardly have been that the *amour propre* of Adêle can have been affected in any way, since at this period her own friendship with Sainte-Beuve was still being continued, notwithstanding the fact that Victor Hugo had forbidden him his house, and, further, had attacked his former friend in a virulent poem of powerful abuse.

Could it, then, have been possible that other actresses, jealous of Juliette and fearful of her influence over the dramatist, had stirred Madame Hugo up to take this cruel step ? It was one certainly foreign to the lethargic nature of Adèle, a woman whom in later years we find repeatedly inviting Juliette to her house in Guernsey.

Whatever the reason, Juliette felt the blow deeply, as is shewn by a letter to Victor Hugo : " My well-beloved, I carry the mourning of a beautiful and admirable rôle which is dead for me for ever. Marie de Neubourg will no longer live for me, and I have a deeper sorrow than you can imagine. This last lost hope has given me a terrible blow. I am demoralised

to the point of not daring again to play in any rôle in anybody's piece."

As a matter of fact, this shock killed Juliette's interest in the stage. Whether or no she suspected her Victor of having had a hand in her disappointment we know not, but what is certain is that, while never relinquishing him or his interests, her thoughts were entirely diverted from the theatre.

We mentioned above that Victor had arranged that he and Juliette were to pass a part of the summer seasons in the country. He had already been in the habit of making summer visits to a spot on the banks of the river Bièvre in a romantic valley a few miles beyond Versailles. Here he and some of his literary friends, including Sainte-Beuve, had occasionally found a warm welcome in a comfortable country house occupied by a gentleman and his daughter who made an admirable hostess. To this house in the happier years of his home life, it had ever been Victor's custom to conduct his Adèle and his children, but that was a thing of the past ; he had, however, still a hankering after the charming country resort, which, going by the name of Les Roches, was situated near a village named Jouy-en-Josas

Not far from this country house, in an expedition of discovery that they made, Victor and Juliette came upon a charming cottage, or small farmhouse, upon the summit of a hill in a hamlet named Les Metz. This cottage he hired for a small sum, paying a year's rental in advance. Not long afterwards Juliette took up her residence at Les Metz in this delightful retreat. Victor at the same time went to live a mile or two away, at Les Roches, with his old friends, M. Bertin and Mdlle. Louise Bertin, the latter of whom, a talented woman and great musician, being not too straight-laced

to meet and make friends with the actress with musical tastes similar to her own.

In this cottage of Les Metz Juliette spent some of the happiest times of her life. She was not alone, as the old wife of the proprietor remained to help her with her *ménage*, and to take over even the cares of the cooking under her superintendence. Daily she and Victor would meet, and together wander about the beautiful woods and country lanes of the neighbourhood. One hollow tree in the forest, of which they also made a trysting-place, was their letter-box, for of course, no matter how much or how often they met, the extraordinary pair could not get on without their usual daily epistolary correspondence. In one place, in a clearing in the woods, was a delightful spring, and here, while they would throw themselves at full-length and listen to the tinkling of the water, Victor would compose some of his most charming poems. Notably in his *Tristesse d'Olympio* is this spring celebrated in verse as rippling as the water in which Juliette would playfully dip her shapely hands to form a drinking cup wherewith to raise the sparkling liquid to their thirsty lips.

Victor loved to instruct his Juliette in the beauties of nature, and he found in her a good pupil, delighting as much as himself in the birds with their nests, the rocks and mosses, the waving reeds at the border of the stream, the foliage of the great trees, the feathery ferns and butterflies of the wood. Thus with hearts overflowing with love for each other, their daily life in the romantic surroundings of the magnificent beeches, the glades of the shady oaks and chestnuts of the forest, was a long-continued idyll.

During these wanderings, Victor, whose mind from childhood had always been religiously inclined, sought, and not in vain, to inspire his companion with thoughts

similar to his own. That his efforts to elevate the mind of Juliette to his own level were not in vain we gather from a letter of hers, written to him after they had been caught in the woods in a terrific thunderstorm, and when Victor had endeavoured to shield her in his arms from the deluge in the shelter of their favourite chestnut tree :

" I would not give this day, and above all the moment when I trembled with cold upon your knees, for the most beautiful and radiant of our summer days. It seemed to me that we became regenerated in this baptism, of which the heavens were the font and love the godfather. All my life I shall feel the impression of each of those drops of rain which fell from your hair upon my neck. All my life I shall hear your tender words of solicitude and instruction. You told me that I had revealed to you what love was, but you have revealed nature to me and, beyond it, the greatness of God. At the end there was a rainbow in the sky ; there was one also in our hearts—they corresponded like the two scales of a balance. I thank you for all the beautiful things which you have caused me to admire, which I should never have seen without you, and the support of your beautiful hand upon my head."

Very much indeed was Juliette in love, and very prettily she expressed her love. It was, therefore, for the poetry which he recognised in her mode of expression that Victor Hugo insisted now, while they were in the depths of the country, that she should increase rather than diminish the number of what she termed " her scrawls " to be daily placed in the post-box formed of the hollow in the chestnut tree. At first, during these charming summer visits, it appears that it was with love alone of the object beloved that the thoughts of the fair woman were filled. Then later,

while at Les Metz, the height of the genius of Victor, the power of his mind, so much above her own, became borne in upon her so that she appeared to worship him as something divine—as a demi-god. From that time forward for the rest of her life her letters abounded with praise, praise of his appearance, his knowledge, his works, his speeches—surely never was there man so much admired and so much belauded.

For the pure style of a love-letter written by Juliette the following may be taken as a specimen :

" The first occasion upon which my heart beat for you, that I felt your lips which burned mine, that my soul was submerged in yours, we only both of us spoke the same tongue, the true, universal language, that of love. Since then I have never learned any other, and I have nothing forgotten of that one. I love you, behold my poetry. I admire you, that is my eloquence. I adore you, behold my style ! I am fatuous enough to believe that did I but love you less my mind would reveal itself as fertile in wit and clever things. Only, however, is it absorbed in my love. I love you, it is all that I can say, and, repeating it so often, it is impossible that I can express myself in other than halting periods."

Juliette humbles herself ; she fears that her terms of expression are weak, that she cannot rise to Victor's level. Then she consoles herself by calling upon him for his help :

" It is for you, the man of art, to aid nature in straightening out and adjusting all these thoughts of love. I am stupid, but come to my aid. But in what can the wit or stupidity of others affect you ? Absolutely in no way whatever. In what can it raise or lower the level of your genius ? In nothing. My heart is full of love for you, while your head is overflowing with intelligence."

To even higher heights of adulation we find Juliette rising as the summer days pass on. She tells her Victor that she is intoxicated with his glance, that she kisses his feet with veneration, that she would like to be dead in order to learn to love him as only the angels love, and, finally, sums up with the statement that all that is good in herself belongs to him while proceeding from him. Even does Juliette go to the extreme lengths of confounding her beloved poet with the Divinity : " It is thee whom I love in God, and God whom I adore in thee " ! Was Victor, with all his genius, worthy of such devotion ?

CHAPTER XIV

COUNTRY JOYS—TOWN COMFORTS

For several years the pilgrimage to the country continued, and each summer-time Victor and Juliette passed a month or two in the woodland surroundings of the valley of the Bièvre. While the old chestnut tree continued to be the post-box as before, the contributions of Victor were usually of the nature of a copy of verses, which were greatly prized by Juliette. One of these pieces, which was headed "To Virgil," was so deeply appreciated by the woman for whom it was written that she wept over it, and, after copying it, enclosed it in a sachet to be worn upon her bosom for ever. It celebrated the beauties of the woodland and the delights of nature, while referring poetically to Juliette, of whom Victor, in addressing the poet Virgil, remarks gracefully:

> "Elle a dans le cœur cette fleur large et pure
> L'amour mystérieux de l'antique nature."

As time passed on and the years succeeded one another, Victor Hugo, who was constantly adding to his literary renown, began to tire of these summer excursions. In consequence they ceased, and he remained now in Paris, to wear the laurels already earned and to gather new ones. Juliette, too, no longer resorted to the dearly-beloved little house upon the hill, and although during a fleeting visit later on which only lasted for a day or so, Victor offered to buy the

place for her, she declined the gift. This was upon the last occasion of these country expeditions. Juliette had expressed a wish to make the pilgrimage to Les Metz once again, so they went there together in lovely summer weather in the middle of August, 1845, when their romantic union had already lasted for twelve years. Little as they knew it then, it would be nearly another forty years before that connection would be severed by the death of Juliette.

Everything was found unchanged in the comfortable cottage, and not a corner was left unvisited by Juliette and Victor, who viewed it with all the delight pertaining to the recollection of the happy days of the past. When, however, the proprietors offered to part with this snug little nest for the sum of 6,000 francs, which Victor expressed himself as being willing to pay, Juliette restrained him; for she knew in her heart that never again would they share the joys of this summer retreat, while never would she want to come there alone. So they bade farewell to Les Metz with no intention to return.

We have mentioned above that Victor Hugo's epistolary communications dropped by him into the hole in the hollow chestnut tree oftentimes took the form of verse rather than prose. Many of these verses, always received so joyfully by Juliette, were later comprised in the poet's publication which appeared in the year 1835 under the name of *Les Chants du Crépuscule*, and which has been described as "admirable lyrism."

One day the pair of lovers visited together at eventide the old village church near which was the Bertins' mansion of Les Roches. Moved by the solemnity of the hour and the stillness of the church, Victor wrote a poem which is incorporated in this collection under the heading of *Dans l'Église de X——*.

Although the verses of this poem do not appear to us to contain any particular charm, they moved Juliette deeply; so much was her emotional nature affected by them that she melted into tears. Victor watched her tears flowing and, affected himself, seized Juliette's hands while solemnly vowing her an eternal fidelity.

More lasting than these vows have proved to be the verses which Juliette discovered in the hollow tree on the following day, and which also were reproduced in *Les Chants du Crépuscule*. There is a charm about these stanzas which will be readily recognised; both the verse and the ideas it contains revealing feeling and delicacy. We reproduce them below:

"O madame, pourquoi ce chagrin qui vous suit?
Pourquoi pleurer encore,
Vous, femme au cœur charmant, sombre comme la nuit,
Douce comme l'aurore?

"Qu'importe que la vie inégale ici-bas
Pour l'homme et pour la femme
Se dérobe et soit prête à rompre sous vos pas
N'avez vous pas votre âme?

"Soyez comme l'oiseau posé pour un instant
Sur des rameaux trop frêles,
Qui sent ployer la branche et qui chante pourtant,
Sachant qu'il a des ailes."

Very many years later, after Victor Hugo had become a widower, we find Juliette going back to the date of the visit to this village church and quoting to the poet the verses that he had then written. That she had taken very seriously the vows sworn to her in the gathering gloom in such solemn surroundings is evident, since she expresses herself as follows:

"Dear Well-Beloved, if it only depended upon me, I think that we should marry to-day, so full is my heart of our past betrothal. I find again within my

heart all the emotions of that day, after more than forty-six years of happiness and of trials, of devotion and of admiration."

Juliette's life in Paris changed but little after she had moved from the Rue de Paradis to larger and more comfortable quarters in the Rue Saint-Anastase, in a district absolutely devoid of the life and movement of the great city—a district of houses standing within their own grounds, varied by a convent here and there.

She was still much pressed for money, saving every sou that was possible for the payment of the balance owing of her old debts. Thus when alone she still half starved herself and continued to pass much of her time in bed in order to economise fuel. Her good spirits, however, never failed her on account of the cold, and if it is particularly freezing in her room she writes playfully that to find any heat there it is necessary to dive for it to the bottom of her heart.

When, however, Victor comes in to supper, after an evening at the theatre, all is changed. For him nothing is too good and, whether we are to take her words seriously or not, she herself says that she serves him on her knees. She probably actually did so at times, in semi-playfulness, semi-devotion.

While thus pressed for money, an extra care was imposed upon Juliette owing to the neglect of the sculptor Pradier to pay regularly the *pension* of her daughter Claire, for whom he had undertaken to provide. The deficiencies were often made up by the child's mother, whose household expenses had to be the closer restricted upon that account. She kept up, however, a good heart and assured her Victor that she was quite prepared for any privation so that she might no longer be compelled to borrow or again run into debt.

VICTOR HUGO IN 1840.

[*Facing p.* 108.

The inaction of Juliette's life weighed upon her all the more that her spirit was naturally independent and she hated the idea of being a cause of expense to Victor, when she knew herself to be quite capable of earning her own livelihood. Her grief increases as she sees fade from before her eyes not only the hoped-for prospect of becoming a great actress so that she might earn money for Victor, but that of being again an actress at all, one capable of providing for herself as the result of her unaided energies.

Before the sad disappointment that Juliette experienced with reference to her engagement in *Ruy Blas*, she was already realising how coldly Victor looked upon her aspirations to return to the stage. She wrote as much to him. After telling him that her life of inaction is ruining her morally, she laments: "I fear that your apparent *insouciance*, where my career is concerned, must be taken as the most formal avowal that I can aspire to no future in my art." Juliette was forced at length to realise the fact that her "*cher petit bien-aimé*" did not indeed wish that she should have any career, that he would not help her to one, as he only considered his own jealousy and was determined to keep her for himself alone.

In the meantime, while Juliette was forced to promise not even to leave her *appartement* unless accompanied by Victor, he commenced to cause himself to be waited for in vain. It was now her turn for jealousy, which was only increased when his duties to do with repetitions at the theatre were given as an excuse. For well did Juliette know the women of the theatre, and what she had to fear from them. Ida Ferrier she had learned to distrust, but more than her she feared that clever and winsome actress, Marie Dorval, a woman who was an *artiste* to the very tips of her fingers and who was seduction personified.

Juliette commenced to rage inwardly against her enforced seclusion, while outwardly she showed signs of rebellion, complaining that a dog whom his master took out with him was better off than herself, who had no such good fortune. " My chain is too strongly riveted for you to have any intention of letting it go."

It was, however, in vain for Juliette to complain angrily that a life of imprisonment with nothing more intellectual to do than read the *Moniteur* was more than she would endure ; in vain, too, that she threatened to run away to a foreign country and so free herself from a slavery which satisfied neither the heart nor the mind, for she was her own prisoner ; the chains that held her were those of her own heartstrings. Thus it happened that while she lamented that Victor withdrew from her daily a part of the love " which he shared so generously in other society," Juliette took no desperate steps towards freedom, but continued to put up with her life as ordained for her by the man whom she loved. By degrees her fits of angry impatience faded away ; when Victor came she received him with delight, when he stayed away she waited for him with eager anticipation for the moment when he should appear to gladden her eyes.

Victor Hugo lived at this period of his life in a house in the Place Royale, his home-life, from the want of attention on the part of his wife, being one absolutely devoid of comfort. Juliette contrived to find the means of visiting him in his house, and was horrified to find his chimney smoking, his room like an ice-house, his lamp giving hardly any light, and his ink-pot nearly dry. How could he work ? she asked herself. Well, perhaps he had a comfortable bed ? Juliette examined his mattress—it was like a piece of board studded with the heads of large nails. How could he sleep, poor fellow ? An investigation of Victor's

wardrobe revealed the fact that his linen was all in holes and needed buttons, while his coats and other garments looked as if they had never been brushed since they had been bought. As for his hose, when she came to examine it the author's faithful friend was more horrified than at anything else. She only found what she described as "aerial stockings."

An inquiry into the way in which Victor Hugo was fed shocked Juliette equally. His food seemed to consist of everything that was indigestible, served pell-mell without any discretion in the order of courses. As he had always a good appetite and ate in a hurry, she feared for her beloved one's health.

Finding things in the Place Royale in this lamentable condition, the loving forethought of the woman was aroused, and she resolved from that moment to appeal to her Victor through his creature comforts, and to make a home for him where he could find them in future in her flat in the Rue Saint-Anastase. She commenced by feeding him there every evening with all the delicacies that she could procure, daintily cooked by her own fair hands. Like a loving mother she looked after him, providing medicines and poultices if he were sick, taking care that he was properly wrapped up if he had a cold.

His clothing was brought to her *appartement* and carefully overhauled by her, everything being cleaned and repaired, his great-coat even being relined and the collar and *revers* covered with the finest silk velvet possible to be found. Victor's white waistcoats also, which had not been fit to be seen, Juliette renovated and carefully ironed.

In this manner she turned Victor Hugo into a new being, so that those who had been accustomed to consider his slovenly appearance as being part of the stock-in-trade of a dramatic poet, turned round to

stare when they met the man, who now looked as if he had jumped fresh out of a band-box.

By degrees nearly all of Victor's raiment found its way to the Rue Saint Anastase, and Juliette found yet other means to turn her dwelling into his real home, where he could work when he liked, and when not working rest in peace and comfort, be well fed and find a comfortable bed to lie in.

In addition, Juliette arranged the bedroom as a comfortable writing-room, with a good table, an arm-chair to sit on, with a good lamp above it and fresh paper, ink, and newly-cut quill pens always ready to hand.

As it was usually Victor's habit to sit up late at night writing, he now had all he desired ; he could write away as long as he liked in his dressing-gown and then tumble into bed. To make this room, which he always called his *atelier*, more homelike, Juliette had hung it for Victor Hugo with pictures of his children.

As he wrote, Juliette, with admiring eyes, would watch him in perfect silence, often occupying her time in scribbling a love-letter to the man before her eyes, a love-letter which usually rather resembled the adoration of a devotee to a god than the caressing words of a woman to a mere mortal man. The following is an example :

" I was watching you just now, my adored one, and felt myself struck with admiration and ecstasy before your beautiful and noble, inspired face. I should have been indeed happy were I but permitted to read on my knees the sublime things that you were writing with eyes so soft and so radiant a brow. I distinctly saw around your dear little head a luminous halo like that which we sometimes see together in the heavens, and while my eyes were dazzled I adored you in my heart."

Were it not that she shewed such evidences of possessing a thoroughly practical nature, one would be inclined to think that the writer of the above epistle —and of thousands more like it—must have been a little mad. It was not, however, madness but excessive —unheard of—love by which Juliette was inspired, and which made her find equally sublime with the writer himself every precious sentence, every word, transcribed by his pen. To her everything that Victor Hugo wrote was fine, was beautiful. Not only did the plays, poems, and romances which she copied out for him fill her soul with an admiration of which she never failed to give expression, but even his political speeches received their equal mede of praise. A dry speech delivered in the Assembly was to Juliette admirable, and although hers had been the hand to copy it before it was delivered, she would read it and re-read it after its delivery in the pages of the Press until she knew it by heart. Everything that came from Victor's pen Juliette carefully annotated and preserved, even stupid little caricatures done by him in pen and ink, were carefully put away and laid up, figuratively speaking, in lavender.

CHAPTER XV

VICTOR HUGO AN IMMORTAL

As the years rolled on, Juliette Drouet continued to be associated in all the ambitions of Victor Hugo; in all the steps that he took towards his advancement in the world of letters she was by his side, his comrade and confidante, his mainstay and moral support, ever, moreover, ready to work for him in the way of copying out his lengthy manuscripts or his political speeches. Her greatest delight was to praise him, to spread her poet's fame, by endeavouring to cause others to look upon him with her own admiring eyes.

To relieve her loneliness, she was, without opposition on the part of Victor, in the habit during the long hours of the day of receiving a few friendly women in the Rue Saint-Anastase, where she rarely beheld the face of the dramatist until after his return from the theatre. To these friends Juliette was in the habit of expounding on the subject of Victor Hugo's glory; she read to them the latest of his verses or his last play, and then sent them out to spread his fame elsewhere. Coming in, however, on one or two occasions when she had her little coterie assembled, he became irritable at not finding Juliette alone, his jealousy being aroused even of these ladies.

Juliette then found it necessary to explain to Victor what a mistake he was making in objecting to her holding these reunions, since she was only doing

so with the object of spreading propaganda among her visitors in his interests.

" If you only knew," she wrote, " how joyful I feel when I have gained for you a soul, a spirit, a sentiment, an admiration. It seems to me that I accomplish my mission as did the apostles with Christ.

" All of these isolated voices that one picks up here and there during life, will form a grand chorus in the court of justice, which will be the voice of the world, which will admire, bless, and praise you."

The loving woman goes on to reveal herself, saying that she feels the necessity of pouring out the overflow of her heart, that she is only obeying her conscience, which bids her to spread all over the earth her admiration, gratitude, and love.

Like a god seated upon the top of Olympus, Victor received all this incense, not that he failed, however, to be duly touched at the devotion of the gentle worshipper, who sustained him and encouraged him whenever he found himself in need of support and encouragement.

When the time came that he sought admission among the forty " Immortals " of the Académie française, and that, according to the custom, it became necessary for Victor to call and solicit the vote of each of the sitting members in turn, Juliette would not allow him to go upon these wearisome expeditions alone, but accompanied him in his cabriolet to door after door, waiting patiently for him in the street while he paid the ceremonial visits.

For several years Victor Hugo was doomed to nothing but disappointment, for the Immortals would not have him among their number. The first time

that there became a vacancy among the forty and that Juliette drove round with him while he made his vain solicitations, was in the wintry weather of February, 1836, when, instead of Hugo, a writer of light comedy was elected. Another vacancy took place late in the same year, upon which occasion the historian Mignet received the majority of votes. Three years later, in December, 1839, once again was Victor Hugo left out in the cold. Upon this occasion, rather than accept Hugo, the jealous Academicians left the empty chair vacant.

In 1840 the eternal round of visits had to be made for the fourth time, when once more was the candidature of the poet unsupported by the majority.

During these years of repeated failure the disappointment of Juliette did not equal that of Victor. For although she bitterly abused the members of the Académie for their want of taste and appreciation, she hated in her heart anything or anybody that would be calculated to keep Victor away from her door—his absences were quite long enough already. Nevertheless, she encouraged him to try again, and once more drove with him on the wearying round when the seat of a M. Limercier became vacant, and there was in consequence another election in January, 1841. Upon this occasion thirty-two out of the thirty-nine Immortals voted. The competition proved a very close one between Victor Hugo and another dramatist named Ancelot. The result of the voting, however, revealed seventeen votes for Hugo against fifteen for Ancelot. At last Victor had won the coveted *fauteuil*, and when this triumph was accomplished his delight at having attained to the so-long-wished-for glory of becoming one of the Immortals of the Académie française was only equalled by that of the faithful Juliette.

Whenever a new member is elected to the Aca-

démie, it is customary that at his *séance de réception*, when he first takes his seat, he shall make a speech. In this he must not forget to commence by speaking in terms of eulogy of the departed member whose *fauteuil* he is to occupy, after which duty is accomplished his remaining choice of subjects is his own. Victor did not have to make his inaugurating address until the following June, but he prepared it months in advance, and when the day came for its delivery so anxious was Juliette, who had copied it out for him, to witness the glory of her "Toto," as she called Victor, that she arose with the early birds at four in the morning. She took her place in the front rank at the door of the Palais Mazarin before even the arrival of the guard of honour. Louis Philippe was now on the throne of France, and as the Citizen King was very partial to Victor Hugo, who paid him assiduous court, some members of the Royal Family were expected to attend the official reception of the new member. Not only did the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans, the Duchesse de Nemours, and the Princesse Clémentine put in an appearance, but also the whole of the world of fashion and of letters crowded into the *salle de réception*, the billowy robes of the ladies almost smothering the distinguished Immortals by whose invitation they were enabled to attend and witness the ceremony.

Victor had not prepared his speech so long in advance for nothing, for he regaled his hearers with a long and magnificent discourse, in which in flowery and poetic language he praised everybody worth praising; that is to say, nearly everybody present in the Palais Mazarin; and many who were absent had administered to them a copious dose of flattery. The astute Hugo had chosen his resonant phrases with calculation, for his object was, if possible, to get himself

selected by Louis Philippe for elevation to his House of Peers, some of the members of which the King was in the habit of choosing from the Académie francaise. From the House of Peers Victor Hugo hoped to step even higher in the political world by becoming a Minister. His efforts to please were not to prove in vain, the King nominated Victor Hugo to the peerage by announcement in the official *Moniteur* four years later, on April 15th, 1845.

Needless to say that of all those who listened to the speech by none were its beauties appreciated more than by Juliette. Of this on the morrow's morn Victor is assured in a letter couched in the following extraordinary terms, in which she irreligiously compares Victor to the Almighty :

" From the moment of your arrival in the *salle* of the Académie I remained in a condition of delicious astonishment, which was half-way between drunkenness and ecstasy. It was like a vision of heaven in which I beheld all the majesty of God. I should live a thousand years without ever that impression being effaced from my heart."

It is indeed evident that Juliette was usually inclined to take her " *Toto bien-aimé* " very much *au grand sérieux*. That she could, however, on occasion also make bold to chaff and make fun of Victor is evident, from a letter couched in humorous style which reveals the latent fun in her nature.

It has to do with this same famous affair of Victor Hugo's election to the Académie, but is written some months before he delivers his grandiloquent discourse before the Royalties and other grandees, being dated 12.15 p.m., Friday, February 26th, 1841, the date being evidently that of his birthday :

" Bonjour, naughty thirty-nine-year-old man ; bonjour, old chap ; bonjour, Academician ! You certainly did turn up this morning to celebrate your anniversary, did you not, Young Fellow ! All right, take care. I will call out your age all over the place ; that will teach you to come and make love to me. I will tell your frightful secret to everyone. I will tell also that it was I who composed for you your reception speech : 'Gentlemen and dear Colleagues, I demand your indulgence in advance, should the emotion which I experience before this august assembly and the memory of the public and private virtues of the illustrious Immortal whom your suffrages have called me to the honour of replacing, if the emotion, I repeat, should stifle my feeble voice in the midst of my sobs. Alas! Gentlemen, allow me to sit down for a minute, the emotion of my heart has gained my body. I fear I have got the colic.' Here you will place your hand upon your Abdomen and appear about to faint. When the scare of the audience has been calmed, you will recommence your discourse, and will finish it amidst the applause of the Assembly. In the meantime, I await you.

" Juliette."

CHAPTER XVI

JULIETTE'S JEALOUSY—VICTOR'S INFIDELITY

If Juliette was for years a sufferer from the pangs of jealousy, and to such an extent that she contrived at times to make her poet feel very uncomfortable owing to her scenes, she considered that she had an unanswerable justification in the fact that it proceeded solely from the depth of her affection. She explained herself clearly to Victor on this point, telling him that in the literature of love he had much to learn; that he must learn to read it anew, that for the future he must for the word "suspicion" read "love," for "rage and "bitterness" he must read "love," for "complaint" read "love"; in short, wherever he found the word "jealousy" replace it by the word "love."

That her reproaches must, however, have been wearisome to one whose ideas on the subject of the literature of love did not coincide with her own can be readily imagined. Especially would this be the case when it is taken into consideration that Juliette was not alone jealous of other women, but her jealousy comprised all things, all people that occupied Victor's time or thoughts to the exclusion of herself. The old King Louis-Philippe, his daughter-in-law the Duchesse d'Orléans, M. Thiers, the rising politician, excited her rivalry equally with the Chamber of Peers and the

Académie française, ladies in society or the actresses of the stage.

Unfortunately, her custom of constantly pointing out to Victor the fact of his glory, his talent, his personal beauty, his immense powers of attraction, the seductiveness of his manner, which must make all alike fall at his feet, did not have the result which Juliette intended of keeping him closer by her side. On the contrary, despite his somewhat advancing years, Victor Hugo naturally argued to himself that if he were still such a seductive person, if he still radiated from himself so many charms, such pleasing powers of conversation, it was absurd not to give a chance to so much talent to be appreciated in a wider circle than that comprised by the four walls of the house in the Rue Saint-Anastase.

It did not affect the case that Juliette still remained a young and gracious-looking woman, devoted to his interests, and the possessor of considerable intellectual powers. He appreciated these facts at their full value, but he could not content himself with a meal of "*toujours perdrix*," especially when the "*perdrix*" herself pointed out to him her own imperfections, the grey hairs beginning to make their appearance above her ivory brow.

Juliette could not, however, change her feelings, and she would not change her methods of making them known, even if her Victor appeared incapable of learning to read the literature of love in the same sense as herself. Thus we find the loving woman continuing to harp upon the same string, still talking to him about his "charming face," and telling him that she trembles lest he should prefer to her some beautiful body only remarkable for its absence of soul. Her letters, while always flattering, are constantly couched in the same strain; all calculated to increase Victor's

self-conceit, all revealing her own jealousy. The following is a specimen :

" You were very handsome and very charming this evening, it is ever thus the days that you are going alone to the theatre. I put up with it but indifferently. No, I will not have you exhibit yourself over there with the pretty face that you wore here just now ; I will not have you follow this custom of showing yourself off as the most fashionable of the men of letters. It was not under those conditions that I undertook to love you. For that matter, why has God, who from all time must have determined to make of you an Academician and a Peer of France, and of me your lover, given to you such a wealth of raven hair and of youth, useless for out-of-date purposes, while leaving me with hair in which the silver threads are beginning to be apparent ? "

Among those actresses of whom the suspicions of Juliette were strongly aroused, were two beautiful Jewesses, Mdlle. Rachel and her sister, Rebeccah. Both of these ditinguished *artistes*, of whom the former was already remarkable for the talent that she displayed in tragedy, were anxious to obtain some of those desirable rôles in Hugo's plays, now for ever denied to Juliette.

That charming writer of dilettante prose, Arsène Houssaye, having taken the Théatre Comédie-Française, contrived to bring about a meeting between Rachel and the poet, in which from Houssaye's own amusing description of the scene the radiant Jewess, figuratively, if not actually, threw herself into the arms of the author of *Hernani* and *Lucrèce Borgia*. From the moment of this first auspicious interview, the rumour began to go round that both of the dark-

eyed beauties were to receive leading parts in Victor's forthcoming piece, called *Les Burgraves*. It was not remarkable if, when these rumours had reached the ears of Juliette, they had not tended to increase her peace of mind. She soon writes to her Toto that in his conscience he must know that he is neglecting her, that all his habits are changing. She knows, however, that her unlimited devotion no longer suffices him, but that pink cheeks, jetty locks, and a beautiful figure contain seductions against which all the love of earth and heaven are only *ennui*, fatigue, and painful constraint. The nearly heartbroken Juliette tells Victor that although she finds it quite impossible to resign herself, she is not without the courage to forgive, But one day he will learn to realise the value of a love such as she has given him—he cannot now, but it may be borne in upon him when it is too late.

The showy attractions of Mdlle. Rachel were apparently not for long wasted upon Victor—and Juliette in consequence warns him against allowing himself "to be seduced by the interested coquetries of that heartless Jewess." She is particularly grieved when, despite her warnings, she finds that he has accepted an invitation to supper with those whom she calls "*ces péronnelles juives*," fearing that under the effects of the sparkling wines his heartstrings may be unloosed and that he may allow himself to be carried away too far. Poor Juliette! She is so much affected at the idea of this supper that she confesses that she is suffering from torments of jealousy and wishes herself dead.

Alas for Juliette! Had she but known it, she had far more cause for jealousy than she was aware of, but this cause did not in any way concern either of the handsome Jewish actresses. For some considerable time past Victor Hugo had been leading a double

life and habitually neglecting her, not for the society of the *artistes* of the theatre but that of a beautiful young *femme du monde*. The lady in question was the twenty-five-year-old wife of a celebrated painter named Biard, and the connection between Madame Biard and the poet had resulted in a terrible *esclandre*, which, through the medium of the Press, had become known to all of Paris with the exception of Juliette, who was restricted to taking in the official paper, the *Moniteur*.

It was only two months or so after Victor Hugo had been elevated to the peerage when the painter, accompanied by a *commissaire de police*, had surprised the author and Madame Biard together in an hotel. The law was then very strict in such matters, and had it not been for the fact that, as a member of the House of Peers, his person was inviolable, Victor would have been haled off to prison, while the lady would have been at her husband's request committed to the correctional prison for females of Saint-Lazare.

However, owing, so Paul Chenay declares, to the intervention of his sister-in-law, Madame Hugo, Madame Biard escaped this scandalous fate by a temporary retirement to a convent. Lamartine, however, tells the story differently. The actual intervention of King Louis-Philippe and some of his family with the Chancellor Pasquier, who connived, is said to have saved Victor Hugo from prosecution before the Court of Peers.

The Comte Horace de Viel-Castel, in his *Mémoires sur le régne de Napoléon III.*, declares that in order to keep M. Biard quiet, Louis-Philippe gave to this artist an order for several pictures ; which statement is supported by Sainte-Beuve, who mentions the price paid for these pictures as being 50,000 francs, paid out of the King's privy purse.

As may be imagined, the political enemies of Victor Hugo did not lose this opportunity of revealing such a scandalous story to the public, and in consequence the pages of the Press were for some days enlivened with the piquant details of the erring poet's misadventure.

In only one respect was Victor Hugo spared. His actual name was not mentioned in either the *National* or the *Patrie*, two journals which otherwise devoted long columns to the affair. The *National* had on a previous occasion, namely, on the date of the announcement of Victor Hugo's elevation to the peerage, indulged in a spiteful pleasantry concerning his assumption of that title of Vicomte to which we have referred earlier in these pages. It then wrote :

" We did not know it ; he was Vicomte ! We have felt a poetical shiver, we have been seized with enthusiasm for the Blason. That large brow in which the east and the west have met each other, we only imagined aspired to a poet's crown, while all the time it wears the crown of a Vicomte ! Victor Hugo is dead, salute M. le Vicomte Victor Hugo, lyrical Peer of France ! "

In an article in the *National* commenting on the revelations which have been already made in other papers, the journal speaks of Victor in scarcely veiled language, mentioning him as " an illustrious personage who adds the laurels of Parnassus to the ermine mantle of the peerage." Further on, the *National* harks back to its previous article : " The peer commenced to argue and invoked the inviolability with which he is covered by the Constitution. The *commissaire* hesitated but finished by letting the gallant *Vicomte* go." The satirical article ends by saying : " The same

journals which have related this adventure and announced a trial before the Court of Peers inform us to-day that the matter has been arranged" (*Le National*, juillet, 10, 1845).

On the day following the appearance of the above, another paper was not so merciful, as in it the poet's name was mentioned, while neither was that of the King concealed. This journal was *La Quotidienne*, which informed its readers that: "according to the promise which he had made to Louis-Philippe, when by his personal request Monsieur . . . had withdrawn his complaint, M. Hugo yesterday obtained his passport and has left for a three months' trip to Spain." (*La Quotidienne*, juillet, 11, 1845).

This was not true. Victor, according to a letter from Sainte-Beuve, had hidden himself, and was working away in some secret corner. Since Hugo was so well concealed that Chopin, among others, believed that he had left Paris, and wrote to his sister on July 20 that he had gone, taking Juliette with him, how did Sainte Beuve know the truth? Presumably it was from Adèle Hugo that he obtained his information, for she alone would know the facts as to Victor Hugo's whereabouts.

As for Juliette, she knew nothing of all this scandal at this time, a fact which we can only account for by imagining that the friends who came to see her were not in the habit of reading the papers. Her sister at Brest had, however, seen *Le National* and *La Patrie*, and had written to ask the meaning of the remarks that she had seen in them. There is no doubt that Juliette, ever on the alert, understood then that something shady had transpired, but what that something was she was unable to discover by questioning Victor Hugo, as he would certainly have either held his tongue altogether or else put Juliette off by saying

JULIETTE DROUET IN 1846.
From the bust by Victor Vilain.

[*Facing p.* 126.

that the papers were always trying to get up some lying scandal or other about anybody of note. Or else Victor may have remained away from her. Thus the utmost that she can have gathered at the time of the scandal was that Victor had been probably betraying her with some person unknown. The time was, however, to come when incertitude was to be changed for certainty, and in a most unexpected and painful manner Juliette was to learn who her rival was.

A year or two later, one day a sealed packet was brought to her door. She examined the seal and, to her astonishment, made out that it consisted of Victor Hugo's coat-of-arms, although the impression on the wax was made in a smudgy manner, as if by somebody unaccustomed to the use of a seal. Opening this packet with trepidation, Juliette was horrified to find that it contained a quantity of love-letters from Victor to a lady. It was evident that they were written to a woman of refinement and education, from the choice of the writer's language and the references to artistic and literary subjects. But alas! these were not the only subjects discussed; no, the letters bristled with the same tender expressions which Juliette had been accustomed to receive herself. To make matters worse, the beauty of the lovely creature to whom the letters had been sent was descanted on, and her age also mentioned as being only twenty-five.

From the bottom of the packet fell out a note. In this Juliette was requested to take notice of the fact that for long past the writer had been recognised in the world and elsewhere as possessing the greater share in Victor Hugo's affections. Juliette was invited, therefore, gracefully to retire in her favour!

We will not here descant upon the agonies that poor Juliette suffered, as in her distress she wandered hope-

lessly about the streets of Paris until long after nightfall, her tears the while bedewing the paving-stones at her feet. Nor will we go through the scenes with Victor, in which she put it to him plainly that the time had come for him to make a decision between Madame Biard and herself—for he must not imagine that after so many years she was going to consent to a mere share in his affections. She herself was ready to go.

He appears to have behaved somewhat cruelly at this time. Juliette had given him three months in which to make up his mind, and during this period he played with her as a cat with a mouse, exercising all his old dominion over her affections but refusing to state definitely which of the two women he would resign.

After, however, they had paid a visit together to the cemetery where both Victor Hugo's daughter Leopoldine and her own daughter Claire were by this time buried, Victor's mood became more natural, his old love became apparent. He called upon the spirits of their " two guardian angels " as witnesses that he would be eternally faithful to Juliette. A few days later they paid a visit together to Fontainebleau, in which a practical recapture was made by him of the faithful woman, who still, however, somewhat doubted his professions. But when, in accordance with Juliette's request, Victor met Madame Biard in a drawing-room and told that lady that for the future they could be no more than ordinary friends, Juliette forgave her Toto for all his delinquencies, and loved him, if possible, more than ever.

CHAPTER XVII

VICTOR A POLITICIAN

In February of the year 1848, all France—say, rather, all Europe—underwent a startling surprise, for on the twenty-second of the month Louis-Philippe was peaceably occupying the throne and comfortably living at the Tuileries, while on the twenty-fourth—paff! he disappeared from the throne, Tuileries, and Paris alike, like a puff of smoke.

It was an extraordinary revolution which thus caused the sudden disappearance of the excellent Citizen King from the scene; indeed, from its suddenness it might truthfully be said that it was an accident rather than a revolution which hustled this well-meaning and democratic monarch out of the way, to make way for a gang of would-be legislators who were scarcely, if at all, more democratic than the King whom they replaced.

A day or two later Louis-Philippe and his Queen landed at Newhaven, in England, under the names of Mr. and Mrs. Smith. An old French lady solemnly assured us not so very long before these lines were written, that they escaped through the sewers of Paris, in which city she was at the time; but we think that the good dame was mistaken and that the King and the Queen simply drove away from the Tuileries in a cab.

Whether or no, with the disappearance of his old

protector and friend from Paris and from France, the light of Victor Hugo's countenance was no longer required to illuminate a House of Peers. The "lyrical Peer of France," to quote the *National*, walked out of the august assembly for the last time to witness the rioters raising barricades in the streets on February 23rd. By replacing his unpopular Minister, M. Guizot, by M. Molé, Louis-Philippe still hoped at that moment that he would be able to save the situation, even if he declined to yield to the howlings of the savage ruffians without for the reform demanded by M. Guizot's opponents. During the howlings, one of the crowd suddenly attacked an officer with a torch, when a sergeant, to protect his officer, fired and killed the man. It was after this first shot that the general firing began on the part of the military; and thus before Victor Hugo walked home the streets of Paris were once more strewn with the bodies of the dead and dying.

On the following morning, however, the day was lost for the King by the defection of the Garde Nationale; these citizen-soldiers, breaking the ranks and shouting for reform as Louis-Philippe was reviewing them outside the Tuileries. And then M. Thiers, who was present with the King, told him that the game was up, whereupon the seventy-five-year-old son of Philippe Égalité let fall the curtain upon the stage of French Royalty and faded away from the scene—the last of the Bourbon Kings was seen no more!

The King had left behind him his daughter-in-law, the Duchesse d'Orléans, and her two little boys, but the crowd, breaking into the Chamber of Deputies, would have none of them, but shouted for a Republic. The deed of abdication which Louis-Philippe had signed, had constituted the Duchesse as Regent for one of these little boys as King, but the Regency ceased as soon as it commenced.

Who, then, or what, was to govern France ? Several literary gentlemen thought that they would be able to do so. One of these was M. de Lamartine and another Victor Hugo. The former proposed the formation of a Provisional Government ; proposed, further, that Victor should become the Minister of Public Instruction, in what was now the commencement of the Second Republic.

For the next few months disorder reigned in Paris, and there was much terrible street-fighting of the usual description, all of the poor and starving sullenly fighting behind tremendous barricades in an effort to overthrow the newly-established Republic.

There were, in addition, horrible murders committed in cold blood by those behind the barricades, who ruthlessly fired upon and killed the Archbishop of Paris and others who, bearing the white flag, came to them as mediators in the hope of staying the bloodshed.

By the month of June affairs had quieted down, owing to the drastic measures taken by General Cavaignac, an old Algerian warrior, to suppress the disorder. There had been elections already for the Chamber, but Victor Hugo had been defeated. In new by-elections later on Victor, however, was more successful, while at the same time was elected as another deputy Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the son of Napoleon's brother Louis, formerly King of Holland, and of Hortense, the daughter of Josephine Beauharnais by her first marriage.

In the days that were to follow Victor was to shew himself as one of the bitter opponents of this Prince, with consequences which resulted in his own exile from France for a great many years.

When, however, both Victor Hugo and Louis Napoleon were elected to the National Assembly in

1848, there was apparent no enmity between the two simple deputies. Nor when subsequently Louis Napoleon defeated General Cavaignac in the election to the Presidency of December, 1848, does Victor appear to have suspected the new President of all the scoundrelism of which he accused him later in two books, named respectively *Napoléon le Petit* and *L'Histoire d'un Crime.* At all events, the poet accepted the invitation to the first presidential dinner, which was given by Louis Napoleon at the Élysée, which had been allotted to him as his official residence. It is true that Victor contrived, either by accident or design, to arrive for this ceremonial dinner half an hour late. Afterwards, however, he made up for his apparent rudeness by treating the new President in a friendly manner, relating to him stories about his uncle, the great Emperor, whom in his boyhood Victor remembered to have seen in that same palace of the Élysée.

The reason that Victor Hugo conceived later such a bitter hatred for the Prince who, by the *coup d'état* of 1851, raised himself to the Second Empire, is not far to find, since it was merely the outcome of the democratic tendencies which he developed after the departure of Louis-Philippe. Some writers maintain that the cause of this Republican tendency in Victor was to be found in Juliette Drouet, who had been born in Republican surroundings and who is said to have often declared her feelings to have remained unchanged in that respect. Therefore, in the intimacy of their private life, Juliette is supposed to have influenced Victor to the extent of changing one who, born under the *régime* of the Napoleon whom he had ever ardently admired, had become a Royalist when he had grown up to manhood under the restored Bourbon dynasty.

When, however, it is remembered how greatly

Juliette hated all political influences which kept Victor from her side, the supposition that she it was who made of him a Republican, must fall to the ground. When princes and kings, royal dukes and duchesses were the means of drawing Victor to them, she hated these royalties, as also the House of Peers. Again, when he became a member of the Republican Assembly, after the flight of Louis-Philippe, Juliette detested that Assembly and all its works, and, what is more, she had never wished that he should become a member of it. She could not see that Victor's eloquent speeches, delivered from the "tribune," would in any way advance his interests in literature or in matters connected with the drama, which in her opinion were the sole matters which should concern her beloved Toto, and, if carefully attended to, would increase his glory and add to his renown, at the same time as fill his purse. She was eminently sensible.

That she disliked the democratic tendency of the times is evident from Juliette's own words written in 1848:

"Drunkards are howling beneath my windows I know not what democratic air, accompanied by a socialistic hiccough. I think that a little less of the 'Marseillaise' and a little more tranquillity would be better for everybody."

Again she shews not only how much she would like to keep Victor out of Republican politics but the most remarkable foresight in the following prophetic letter:

"The more I think about it, the more it is impossible for me to wish that you should be elected to this Assembly. I foresee that all your courage, all your devotion, and all your genius will not suffice to

prevent the coming catastrophe, which will dislocate and carry away the Republic. It would be far better that you should find yourself alone with all your powers when arrives that moment of regeneration."

This was June, 1848, foreseeing December, 1851 ! How wise Juliette was, and how much better it would have been for Victor had he but listened to the sapient words of the woman who loved him so disinterestedly ! Had he but done so, he would have been saved an exile from France that lasted for twenty long years ; an exile that was shared by Juliette herself, Juliette to whose advice he had so foolishly refused to listen.

In spite of Juliette, Victor Hugo became a member of the Assembly, but was France ever the better for one of the pretty speeches that he delivered ? He stood almost alone, speaking against all parties and chiefly upon Utopian subjects emanating from his own brain. The liberty of the Press, individual liberty, assisted labour, the fraternity of peoples, moral progress, the abolition of poverty ! We have heard much of many of these subjects since the time of Victor Hugo, but his day was not ready to receive them. He received no support in the House while Juliette made fun of him and smiled.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COUP D'ÉTAT—VICTOR IN DANGER

WHILE foretelling to Victor evil days for the Legislative Assembly, and smiling good-naturedly at his abortive efforts to reform the world through the medium of its laws, Juliette is still unable to conceal either the admiration or the jealousy aroused by the knowledge that her "dear little Representative" is making himself conspicuous in the eyes of others. When thinking of him in his place in the Assembly one day in January, 1849, she cannot restrain herself from allowing her thoughts to filter through to Victor in one of her "scrawls," worded as follows:

"I think of you at this minute mounted to the tribune, all the opera-glasses, whether of males or females, are riveted upon you. You are handsome, you are great, you sip your glass of water, sweetened by the sweat of the people. My heart beats with jealousy, with love, and also with indignation at your gluttony of eloquence."

On another occasion, while he is sleeping "upon his Representative's ears," Juliette scribbles that she applauds his slumbers, for he will have time enough later on to listen to the rising storm. Only in one respect is she mistaken in her prophecies, and that is in the nature of the coming storm that she foresees.

Juliette imagines that this disturbance is likely to arise within the Assembly itself, after the nature of the troubles in the National Convention at the time of the French Revolution, when Robespierre and Saint-Just were busy cutting off the heads of their colleagues. The trouble looming ahead, which was so soon to scatter the national Representatives like a flock of sheep, was to come from without, although the hand to launch the thunderbolt had, equally with the members of the Assembly, received its authority from the votes of the people.

During the years that he sat in the Chamber, from 1848 until 1851, Victor Hugo never lost an opportunity of shewing himself opposed to the President, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. This fact is the more remarkable when it is remembered that he was born under a Napoleonic *régime*, and had in latter days frequently aroused the feelings of France with his full-throated song in praise of the great Corsican. His ode to the Vendôme Column had been a very considerable factor in resuscitating the Bonapartist feeling, or, perhaps, it would be more accurate to say, the Bonapartist tradition, in France. Nevertheless, no sooner was a nephew of the Emperor Napoleon I. established in a position of authority at the Élysée than Victor joined actively with all those in the Legislative Assembly who neglected no possible endeavour to keep the President in what they considered to be his proper place.

The President was not, however, one to be easily suppressed, and as time passed on the contest of wills between the Élysée and the Assembly became more and more marked. In the latter, Victor Hugo, developing as an ultra-Republican, commenced to raise the voice of democracy the louder as at the former there became evident a determination to

impose an arbitrary and personal government upon France.

Owing to his Utopian schemes, upon which he descanted so frequently and freely in the Chamber, Victor, apart from his popularity with the educated classes as a writer, gained another popularity, that of the poor people, whose wrongs and poverty he shewed himself so anxious to relieve. The poor in Paris and the turbulent, angry class, ever ready to throw up a barricade and resist authority, were at this period one and the same thing. Victor Hugo was therefore rightly considered in the light of one apt to be a leader of the dangerous element of the people. He was not, in consequence, greatly appreciated by the President, whom he detested, and whose ardent desire was to win this class over to himself.

In this endeavour Louis Napoleon was scarcely successful in Paris, although by frequent tours in the provinces he was more fortunate in the way of winning popularity. This was chiefly obtained by an appeal to the old Napoleonic tradition, which was still strong in the country places among the survivors of the Grand Army and their descendants.

The army the President lost no opportunity of gaining over to himself, but in his effort to place it under his own immediate authority he was for a time foiled not only by the Assembly as a whole, but by two of its members in particular, both of them general officers. These were Generals Cavaignac and Changarnier, of whom the former had been his opponent for the Presidency and had subsequently become Minister of War. Both of these distinguished officers had made their mark in Algeria under Louis-Philippe, and the former was a particularly strong man with whom it was imagined the President would not dare to interfere. General Changarnier commanded the troops in Paris

and was popular with the people, which Cavaignac was not. Both of these officers, however, the President had the courage to replace. Changarnier was relieved of his command at the beginning of 1851, despite the protests of the Ministers, while a tool of the President's named Saint-Arnaud, a man of no principle, went to the Ministry of War instead of Cavaignac in September of the same year.

When Prince Louis Napoleon had given the command of the troops in Paris to a General Magnan and established a man named de Maupas as Prefect of Police, he began to feel the ground secure under his feet.

The Assembly at the same time was beginning to feel nervous, in spite of which that body deliberately proceeded to provoke the President by refusing to prolong his term of office after the year 1852. The result was that Prince Louis Napoleon not only determined to seize by force the power refused to him, but a greater power also ; in fact, to revive his uncle's Empire in his own person.

In Victor Hugo's book, *L'Histoire d'un Crime*, he tells in minute detail the circumstances of the President's successful *coup d'état* of December 2nd, 1851, and the cold-blooded butchery of hundreds of inoffensive people which accompanied it. We will presently describe as nearly as possible in Victor's own graphic words the cruel massacre which, by the President's orders, took place in the Boulevard Montmartre. Before doing so we must, however, relate in general terms some of the experiences of Victor Hugo during the fatal days from December 2nd to 7th, 1851, and the share taken in them by Juliette.

It was at eight o'clock on the morning of December 2nd, 1851, that one of his colleagues named Versigny came and woke him up in bed. He informed Hugo

that the Assembly premises were occupied by soldiers, that there had been many arrests made of deputies during the night, and, in short, that "the Republic was a prisoner."

Juliette had been warned in her home almost at the same time of what was taking place by a friend, who was a young actress.

Without even waiting to take the time to cover herself with a cloak, Juliette dashed out into the wintry air of the streets. She searched for Victor all day, going first to a house in the Rue Blanche where a number of the alarmed Representatives had had a hurried meeting of consultation, and then wandering about the streets, through which Victor, with a friend named Charamaule, was going from place to place in an effort to stir up the apathetic citizens of Paris against the Prince-President.

Neither morning nor afternoon could Juliette find her Toto. She returned to her house chilled to the bone and full of alarm, since she had heard that several hundreds of the deputies had been surrounded by armed troops and marched off to prison.

At night Victor arrived suddenly at her house. He told her that he had been drawing up a proclamation in the name of the Republican members, that he had had nothing to eat all day but a piece of chocolate given him by Charamaule, and that now he did not know where to find a place of surety. They both agreed that it would be unsafe for Juliette to attempt to hide Victor, since her house would be the first place that the police would be likely to search. Together, then, they sallied out once more into the streets, to find a small dealer in liquor named Auguste, whom Juliette had hidden during the insurrection of June 26th, 1848, and who had subsequently owed his life to a pardon accorded him by Victor Hugo, who as

a Representative of the Assembly had been sent to accompany a party deputed to hunt for fugitives.

The pair had a wearying and terrifying tramp through the streets, meeting and endeavouring to elude either mounted or infantry troops at every turn of every road. After finding and having a long political talk with Auguste and some friends of his, who reported that the spirit of the people was as yet against a rising in arms against the troops, Juliette left Victor for a time while she went off to see if a friend would give him refuge. She returned eventually with a cab, and carried him off in safety to the house of her friend, M. de la Roëllerie. Together, to quote *L'Histoire d'un Crime*, they hid him " in a sure place."

Early in the morning Juliette arrived again to fetch Victor, who was to proceed to a secret meeting of those Representatives of the Left who had escaped arrest. On the way he proved irrepressible, and put his head out of the cab window to harangue the soldiers with whom the Place de la Bastille was crowded. " You will get yourself shot ! " exclaimed Juliette, as she pressed his arm.

All that day, December 3rd, Juliette dogged Victor's footsteps as he hurried about from place to place, from secret meeting to secret meeting. Late at night she at length deposited him at No. 19, Rue de Richelieu, where he was in security.

Early in the following morning, however, the faithful woman failed to find him, for he was already afoot and had gone off to concert with M. Jules Grévy measures for the preservation of the Republic.

During the course of her peregrinations this day Juliette was threatened and almost shot by a soldier for the crime of crying out in horror when she stumbled suddenly upon a heap of bleeding corpses of men and women.

At last she found Victor, and that night again he slept in peace at 19, Rue de Richelieu.

How greatly in danger of his life was Victor is evident from the fact that M. de Maupas, the Préfet de Police, wrote this day to the Minister of the Interior, M. de Morny, "to do what he liked" with Victor Hugo. As Morny, the illegitimate son of Hortense and the Comte de Flahaut, was the instigator of his half-brother, the Prince-President, throughout the whole of the nefarious business of the *coup d'état*, had he caught Victor there is not the slightest doubt but that he would have turned him over at once to a firing squad.

It was, indeed, more owing to good luck than good management that Juliette's Toto had already escaped death, for so boiling over with indignation was he at the arrest of some of the Representatives of the people, that he had done everything to court it. Not only had he torn down the President's proclamations from the walls and gone about crying, "*À bas Bonaparte!*" and "*Vive la Constitution!*" but he had insulted the soldiers who were as the result of discipline simply carrying out the orders that had been given to them.

Hugo, whose courage was undoubted, had been thirsting for action ever since the moment that he had been aroused in his bed by Versigny with the words, "The Republic is a prisoner."

That morning, at a gathering with other members of his party at No. 70, Rue Blanche, he had endeavoured to carry these members of the Left with him in an immediate attempt to rouse the people to arms. His ideas, it must be confessed, were anything but practical. He proposed that all the Representatives of the Left, wearing their official scarves, should march in procession along the boulevards, while crying out, "*Vive*

la République! Vive la Constitution!" Calm and unarmed, they should present themselves to the troops and summon them to obey the law. Should the troops yield, then these Representatives would proceed to the Assembly and make an end of Louis Bonaparte. If the soldiers shot down the legislators, then those who escaped would scatter throughout Paris, crying out, "To arms!" and raise barricades. That there was no time to be lost.

Some of those present applauded this mad scheme of braving the 80,000 troops in Paris. One member of the Left, Michel de Bourges, however, opposed it. He argued: "We must give the people time to understand what has taken place; they are not moving yet for they have been taken by surprise. When they have become irritated they will rise of themselves. We Representatives would be foolish to try to rush matters. To march at once upon the soldiers would be to get ourselves shot down for absolutely no good whatever—to deprive the people of its natural chiefs—the popular army would be left without any head. It is necessary to reserve ourselves, to give ourselves up now would be to lose the battle before commencing it."

Michel de Bourges continued by urging that it was wiser for the Representatives of the Left—who were the Republicans—to remain free and keep calm, waiting for the people to become angry, and in the meantime he recommended those present not to join a meeting of the Representatives of the Right which was just about to take place, as to do so would only mean prison for all together. All that this level-headed member considered could be done for the moment was, if only printers could be found not controlled by the presence of the troops in the printing-offices, to post up manifestos giving the article No. 68

of the Constitution which had been trampled underfoot by the illegal action of the President.

Victor Hugo, listening to these words of wisdom, was convinced, although it was but half-heartedly, that he resigned his plan for attempting to at once rouse the populace of Paris. How wise, however, was Michel de Bourges became evident when some three hundred Monarchist members of the Right were rounded up by the soldiers and flung into the Prison of Mazas, as if they were so many convicts, to be confined there in the most horrible cells, which were cold, dark, and insanitary, and for furniture only provided with one chair, there being no table or bed, but a hammock, with one blanket only, being allowed at night.

The Generals Cavaignac and Changarnier had already been arrested in their beds, and by way of a sarcastic jest Prince Louis Napoleon had sent them off to be imprisoned in the mouldy fortress of Ham, where he had himself been incarcerated for six years, after his foolish attempt on Boulogne in the reign of Louis-Philippe.

On the same day as took place this meeting in the Rue Blanche, Victor, with his friend Deputy Charamaule, were returning from a fruitless errand which had been undertaken to enlist a couple of officers in the cause of the Republic. Having dismissed their cab, they walked along the Boulevard Saint-Martin to observe the attitude of the people. High sidewalks ran along the sides of the road, and these were crowded by workmen in blouses. As the two deputies arrived, a battalion of infantry came swinging along the road, the drums in front and with bayonets fixed. As the head of the column reached the spot, all of the workmen raised a furious cry of *"Vive la République!"* The soldiers looked

doubtfully at the crowd, wondering if the cry was raised in applause or to jeer at them.

At that moment the crowd recognised the poet, and surging round him, began to raise the shout of " *Vive* Victor Hugo ! " One man asked :

" Citizen Victor Hugo, what must we do ? "

" Take up arms."

" Bravo ! " cried the crowd.

Victor continued : " Louis Bonaparte is a rebel. To-day he covers himself with every crime. We, the Representatives of the people, place him ' out of the law,' but he has already become out of the law by the mere fact of his treason. Citizens, you have two hands ! Seize your rights with one and a gun with the other and go for Bonaparte ! "

" Bravo ! Bravo ! " the people cried.

A tradesman near, who was closing his shop, called out : " Don't speak so loud ; if you were heard you would be shot."

Victor was not, however, to be silenced, and replied boldly : " Very well, you will carry my corpse around and it will be a good thing if the justice of God comes out of it."

From the throats of the assembled hundreds renewed shouts arose of " *Vive* Victor Hugo ! *Vive la Constitution ! Vive la République ! "*

Victor Hugo, who had been baulked of his will at No. 70, Rue Blanche, thought that now had come his opportunity to raise the people. To quote his own words :

" Enthusiasm, indignation, and rage mixed their lightnings in every glance. I thought then, and I think still, that that was perhaps the supreme minute. I was tempted to carry this crowd with me and commence the combat.

"Charamaule restrained me. He seized my arm.

"'You will cause a useless destruction by grape-shot. All of these people are unarmed, the infantry are close at hand, and here come the artillery!'

"I turned. Several guns were arriving at a quick trot from the Rue de Bondy.

"The advice to abstain given me by Charamaule struck me. Coming from a man of such well-known bravery it was not suspicious. I remembered, moreover, the determination arrived at at the Rue Blanche, and I withdrew before the responsibility which I should incur. To seize such a moment might mean a victory, it might just as well prove a massacre. Was I right? Was I wrong?

"The crowd was increasing round us and it was becoming difficult to advance. Suddenly someone pushed my arm. It was Léopold Duras, of the *National*.

"'Go no further,' he said. 'Michel de Bourges has been trying to harangue the people at the Restaurant Bonvalet, but the troops came and surrounded it. He has had the greatest difficulty in escaping. Several Representatives coming to join him there have been arrested. Go back again to the former rendezvous in the Rue Blanche. I have been hunting for you to warn you.'

"A cabriolet passed. Charamaule hailed the driver and we flung ourselves in, followed by the crowd, which cried, '*Vive la République! Vive* Victor Hugo!'

"We went at a gallop, and in a quarter of an hour had reached the Rue Blanche in safety."

Aware of the risks that Victor was running at every hour of the day, risks frequently incurred in a foolhardy manner, the anxiety of Juliette on his behalf

was almost beyond endurance. It was because she so well knew the impetuosity of his nature, which rendered him perfectly unable to control himself in the presence of danger, that she could not bear to allow him out of her sight in this time of crisis.

Another occasion upon which he exposed himself unnecessarily to the danger of getting shot we may call the affair of the omnibus.

CHAPTER XIX

THE INCIDENT OF THE OMNIBUS

Upon the return of Victor Hugo and Charamaule to No. 70, Rue Blanche, a large number of persons were found gathered there already, sixty of whom were members of the Left—the Republican party—the remainder sympathisers, of whom some were editors of newspapers. Some editors, however, were not at the meeting, having been arrested and flung into prison.

Those present approved greatly when Charamaule informed them of the advice that he had thought fit to give to Victor, considered also that Hugo had done wisely to be guided by it. All, however, wondering what would be the next step advisable for them to take, Victor suggested a proclamation to the people. To this all agreed, and while he dictated a Representative named Baudin, who was to die bravely on a barricade very shortly, took down his words. It commenced as follows:

"To the People.
Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is a Traitor.
He has violated the Constitution.
He is forsworn.
He is Out of The Law."

The proclamation ended by the words, "*Vive la République! Aux Armes!*"

A dozen copies were rapidly made, and various persons took them off with them in the hopes of being able to find printers bold enough to print them, to find also courageous spirits to affix the proclamation to the walls of Paris.

At this moment a man came in and said : " There are troops on the march to surround this house. You have not, citizens, got a moment to spare ! "

Some of those present replied, " Well, what does it matter ? Let them come and take us, and thus their crime will be complete."

Victor Hugo, however, advised that all should if possible avoid arrest, so as to engage in the battle against Bonaparte and harry him by all the means in their power. This being agreed to, all left the house, and as they did so the soldiers were seen advancing towards it.

After other meetings that day, as night was falling, Victor found himself in the streets in a distant part of Paris, in company with two Italians and a French friend named Arnaud de l'Ariège. The Italians were a Colonel Carini and Signor Montanelli, who had been a Minister of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and both of these gentlemen were ardent Republicans, hoping from France to obtain the deliverance of Italy.

To the disappointment of all, upon reaching a cab-stand not a vehicle was to be seen. The drivers, fearing that their cabs might be made use of to build up barricades, had all made themselves scarce. Presently a passer-by said to a friend aloud :

" The omnibuses are still running in the Boulevards."

Taking the hint, the four friends hurried off to a place where they found the Omnibus de la Bastille, into which they all climbed. We will give Hugo's description of what followed :

" Rightly or wrongly, I had at heart a bitter regret of the lost opportunity of the morning. I said to myself that in decisive days those minutes come but do not return. There are two theories in revolution : to carry the people with one or to allow them to arrive. Mine had been the former, but through discipline I had obeyed the latter. I reproached myself, saying : ' The people offered themselves and we did not take them. Now it is our turn, not to offer ourselves but to do more, to give ourselves.' "

Victor's ideals were fine, but in a time of revolution they were too romantic, and impractical in consequence. His generous spirit, which would give freedom to all, led him to bombastic exaggeration. Thus when Montanelli seized his hands and expressed the fervent hope that France would deliver Italy Victor replied : " She will deliver Europe ! "

On another occasion during the crisis someone rushed up to him and asked : " And what will you do, Monsieur Victor Hugo ! "

" Everything ! " was his reply, and he probably meant what he said—he had no intention of sparing himself.

The only occasion upon which during this critical time we find the fiery Victor giving practical advice we have just recorded. His advice to his friends in the Rue Blanche not to sit still and await arrest was eminently sensible. But we wonder at him giving it ; we should rather have expected him to exclaim in a dramatic manner, " I will be the first to be arrested ! "

The generous manner in which Victor was willing to take useless risks certainly leaves him a more picturesque figure in our eyes, but the unfortunate fact remains that it did not help the situation in any way that, while ready to risk getting his own throat cut

merely to let off the steam of his indignation against Louis Bonaparte, he endangered the throats of other people also.

The incident of the omnibus is a case in point. We will now proceed with Victor's relation of that event :

" Meanwhile the omnibus started to go. It was full. I had seated myself at the bottom on the left, Arnaud de l'Ariège was seated next to me, Carini opposite and Montanelli next to Arnaud.

" Arnaud and I did not speak ; in silence we exchanged pressure of the hands, which is in a way an exchange of thoughts.

" As the omnibus advanced towards the centre of Paris, the crowd was denser in the Boulevard. As it entered the ravine of the Porte-Saint-Martin, a regiment of heavy cavalry came from the opposite direction. In a few seconds this regiment was passing by us. They were Cuirassiers. They defiled at the trot with the sabre bare. The people on the raised sidewalks leant over to see them pass. Not a cry ! This people melancholy on the one side, on the other the triumphant soldiers, all this stirred my heart.

" Suddenly the regiment came to a halt. Some obstruction or other in that narrow ravine of the Boulevard in which we were squeezed up momentarily prevented its march. By stopping it stopped the omnibus. The soldiers were there. There, under our eyes two paces away, their horses pressing against the horses of our carriage were those Frenchmen turned into Mamelukes, those fighting citizens of the great Republic transformed into supporters of the *bas-empire.* I could almost touch them from my place. I could stand it no longer !

" I flung down the window of the omnibus, put

my head out, and gazing fixedly at this serried line of soldiers facing me, cried:

"'Down with Louis Bonaparte! Those who serve traitors are themselves traitors!'

"Those nearest to me turned their heads and looked at me with a drunken air; the others never moved, but remained with their sabres at the carry, the peak of their helmets over their eyes, which were fixed on their horses' ears.

"There is in great things the immovability of the statue, and in low objects the immovability of the lay-figure. Passive obedience of the soldier to a crime makes of him a lay figure.

"At my cry, Arnaud turned suddenly; he also had lowered his window. With his body half-way out of the omnibus and his arm outstretched, he cried:

"'Down with the traitors!'

"To behold him thus with his bold gesture, his handsome face pale and calm, his ardent glance, his long chestnut beard, one fancied that one had before one's eyes the radiant and terrible glance of an irritated Christ.

"The example was electric and contagious.

"'Down with the traitors!' cried Carini and Montanelli.

"'Down with the dictator! Down with the traitors!' repeated a generous young man whom we did not know, and who was seated next to Carini.

"'Hold your tongues!' cried the other four people in the omnibus, who were terror-stricken.

"'You will get us all massacred,' they declared, and one more frightened than the rest lowered the window-pane and began to shout to the soldiers: '*Vive le Prince Napoléon! Vive l'Empereur!*'

"But we were five, and shouted him down with '*À bas Louis Napoléon!*

"The soldiers listened in a dull silence. A corporal with a menacing air turned towards us and shook his sword at us. The crowd looked on with stupor.

"What was taking place within me at that moment I could not say. I was in a whirlwind. I had given way once before calculation when I thought the opportunity was a good one. And now, finding an insolence in this meeting, I was giving way to fury.

"A woman on the sidewalk screamed out to us: 'You will get yourselves cut to pieces!'

"I vaguely imagined that some sort of a shock would take place, that either from the crowd or from the troops the spark would fly. I wished for a sabre-stroke from the soldiers or a cry of rage from the people.

"But nothing came, neither sabre-cut nor cry of rage. The troops made no movement and the people kept silence. Was it too late? Was it too soon?

"The gloomy man of the Élysée had not foreseen the case of an insult to his name being flung point-blank in the face of the soldiers. The soldiers had no orders; they had them by that very evening, that became evident on the morrow.

"Presently the regiment went off at a gallop—the omnibus started also. As long as the cuirassiers were passing by Arnaud de l'Ariège, still half out of the window, continued to cry in the ears of these men who were but at arm's length, whose horses touched us: 'Down with the dictator! Down with the traitors!'

"We descended in the Rue Lafitte, where we separated.

"Presently a man passed me; he was a workman in a tannery. He whispered to me hurriedly: 'Do not go home. Your house is surrounded.'"

When Victor was told that his house was surrounded by the troops he went off, as we have already described, to find Juliette, who found for him for that night a place of safety with the assistance of M. de la Roëllerie, while for the following night or two he found a refuge at 19, Rue de Richlieu.

During December 5th, 6th, and 7th, Juliette continued to keep an eye upon Victor Hugo and was constantly appearing by his side in unexpected places. Unable to find him before daylight upon the morning of the 6th, she waited for long on the watch, freezing, in a dark archway. Upon his not putting in an appearance her anxiety was so great that she commenced to perambulate the streets, when she was much alarmed by the suspicious movements of two police officers, who appeared to be watching her. To make sure that they were not dogging her footsteps, Juliette shadowed these police-sergeants in turn, until she had followed them to a distance, to a district where she thought that they had no chance of stumbling unexpectedly upon her Victor. She then retraced her footsteps and again waited.

Upon December 7th Victor, who was by this time at his wits' end, not knowing which way to turn, risked once more a visit to the Rue de Richelieu. Under the arch of the gateway Juliette Drouet was waiting. "Do not enter," she exclaimed, as she seized him by the arm. "It is not safe; come with me." She conducted him through a courtyard and carried him off in a cab to a new hiding-place that she had arranged for him with a M. and Mme. de Montferrier.

CHAPTER XX

THE REPRESENTATIVES AT THE BARRICADE

Victor Hugo and the other Republican members of the Left who had escaped imprisonment when some three hundred other Representatives of the Assembly had been driven off to prison in the vans used to convey convicts, displayed a fearless disposition in their attempts to resist the President's *coup d'état*, which had taken them unprepared.

They had not, however, a chance from the first, for, while the Press was muzzled, Louis Napoleon had covered the walls with speciously-worded placards, which deceived the people. These proclamations had been printed at night and by the use of force, every printing-office being filled with troops while two soldiers stood over each workman printer with fixed bayonets, to see that he accomplished his apportioned task without attempting to exchange a word with his comrades. Since, moreover, the printers were threatened with death should they print any proclamations save those of the Prince-President, it may be imagined that Victor and his Republican friends found great difficulty in placarding the walls in turn. They found, however, some devoted spirits brave enough to risk being shot and not only to print or to lithograph their proclamations declaring Louis Napoleon to be " out of the law," but actually to stick them up on the walls alongside those placed there already by the President's orders.

Much time, however, was lost, and it did not at first filter through to the puzzled brains of the populace of Paris that they were being bamboozled, and that what was actually being accomplished was the destruction of the Republic by the unprincipled person who continued to figure as the head of the Republic.

The first taking up of arms to resist the 80,000 troops with which the streets of the city were filled, was an extraordinary affair, in which some ten of the Republican members attempted to raise the people in the name of the law, by themselves making a barricade in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Intervening troops had prevented Victor from joining this courageous band. Marching two by two from the Café Roysin, and wearing their official scarves, they had paraded the streets shouting "*Aux armes!*" and had personally disarmed the soldiers occupying two guard-houses and possessed themselves of their muskets and cartridges.

A few of the people had joined these Representatives, but their numbers had not reached more than fifty in all when they had made their insecure barricade of an omnibus and a few carts which were overturned, and patiently waited behind it to be attacked.

This could only be a matter of minutes, as a staff-officer had seen what was going on and galloped off to send some troops to capture this weakly-erected obstruction.

Presently a couple of companies of infantry were seen advancing. Then the Representatives displayed the greatest courage. While Deputy Baudin was left standing perfectly exposed to fire on the side of the overturned omnibus, seven other deputies, headed by one named Schœlcher, advanced from the barricade unarmed to meet the soldiers. Victor Hugo tells us what followed :

" When the soldiers and officers saw the seven Representatives approaching they were stupefied for a minute ; nevertheless the captain made signs to them to stop where they were.

" They halted accordingly, when Schœlcher said in grave tones :

" ' Soldiers ! we are the Representatives of the Sovereign people ; we are your Representatives ; we are those elected by universal suffrage. In the name of the Republic, we, who are the National Assembly, we who are the law, order you to join yourselves to us ; we summon you to obey us. We are your chiefs. The army belongs to the people, and the Representatives of the people are the chiefs of the army. Soldiers ! Louis Bonaparte has violated the Constitution, we have put him ' out of the law.' Obey us ! '

" An officer who commanded, a captain named Petit, stopped him.

" ' Gentlemen, I have my orders. I am one of the people. I am a Republican like yourselves, but I am only an instrument.'

" ' You know the Constitution,' answered Schœlcher

" ' I only know my instructions.'

" ' There is one order above all orders, and to which the soldier is subject, and that is the law,' Schœlcher replied.

" He turned again to harangue the soldiers, but the captain cried : ' Not another word ! If you add one word I give the order to fire.'

" ' It is all the same to us ! ' remarked Schœlcher.

" The battalion-commander arrived on horseback at this moment and spoke in a low tone to the captain.

" ' *Messieurs les Représentants*,' exclaimed this latter, waving his sword, ' retire or I fire.'

" ' Fire then,' observed de Flotte.

" The Representatives, in heroic imitation of the

Battle of Fontenoy, took off their hats and boldly faced the muskets.

" Schœlcher alone kept his hat on and waited with his arms crossed.

" ' With the bayonet,' ordered the captain, and, turning to the companies, cried : ' *Croisez bayonette !* '

" ' *Vive la République !* ' answered the Representatives.

" The bayonets were levelled, and the companies charged at the double upon the immovable deputies.

" It was a terrible and grand moment. The seven Representatives saw the bayonets at their hearts without a word, a gesture, a movement backwards. There was, however, hesitation, if not in their souls, in the hearts of the soldiers.

" The soldiers realised distinctly that their uniform would be doubly soiled by an attempt upon the persons of the people's Representatives, which is a treason, and by killing unarmed men, which is an act of cowardice.

" Now treason and cowardice may sometimes suit the general very well—but never the soldier.

" When the bayonets were actually touching the breasts of the Representatives, they turned aside of their own accord, and without injuring them, the soldiers passed between the Representatives and went forward.

" Only Schœlcher had his overcoat pierced in two places, but he was convinced that this was the result of awkwardness, not design. One of the soldiers facing him wanted to put him further away from the captain and touched him with his bayonet. The point came against the book filled with the Representatives' addresses which he had in his pocket, and merely pierced the cloth.

" One soldier remarked to de Flotte : ' Citizen, we do not want to hurt you.'

" Another approached Bruckner and aimed at him.

"'All right, fire!' said Bruckner.

"The soldier, much moved, lowered his musket and grasped the Representative by the hand.

"Wonderful to relate, in spite of the order given by their commanders, the two companies arrived in succession, by sections, upon the Representatives, charging with the bayonet, but turned aside.

"The battalion commander said later: 'We had been told that we should have to do with a lot of rascals, we found heroes.'

"Meanwhile the barricade was becoming anxious. Seeing them surrounded and wanting to help them, someone fired a shot. This shot unfortunately killed a soldier between de Flotte and Schœlcher.

"The officer commanding the second attacking company was passing as the unfortunate man fell.

"'Look, lieutenant! Do you see?' exclaimed Schœlcher, pointing at the soldier stretched at his feet.

"The officer replied with a gesture of despair: 'What could we do?'

"The two companies replied to this shot by a general discharge, and rushed on to assault the barricade, leaving behind them the seven Representatives, astounded at being still alive.

"The barricade replied by a volley, but could not hold. Baudin was killed still standing in his place of combat upon the omnibus. He was pierced by three bullets, being shot above the eye and through the brain. Bourzat, fighting next to him, had his coat riddled, but was unhurt.

"A thing to be observed is that the soldiers made no prisoners in this conflict. Those defending the barricade escaped in the streets or into the neighbouring houses. Maigne, pushed by some frightened women behind a door in an alley, found himself shut up there with one of the soldiers who had carried the barri-

cade. The Representative and the soldier came out together. The Representatives were able quite freely to leave this first field of combat.

"At this solemn commencement of the struggle a last glimmer of justice and right yet shone, and military probity recoiled with a kind of gloomy anxiety before the outrage into which it was being driven. Although later the drunkenness of evil drowned the conscience of the soldier, the French army is not made to commit crime. When the struggle was prolonged and it became necessary to obey the savage orders given the soldiers became giddy. They obeyed, not coldly, which would have been monstrous, but with rage, which history will recall as their excuse, and perhaps there was, in fact, despair at the bottom of this rage."

CHAPTER XXI

PREPARATIONS FOR THE CRIME

The resistance of the Representatives commenced to bear fruit and Paris to arm; the difficulty was, however, that owing to the communications being cut, the Representatives were unable to meet in a body and act as a whole. Victor Hugo was on one side, de Flotte on another, and the valiant Schœlcher somewhere else. Thus the people were in need of direction. That Victor Hugo was personally in great danger should he be arrested became evident at one of the committee meetings that he attended. A letter was brought in from Alexandre Dumas to one of his colleagues, named Bocage, which said: "At six o'clock to-day 25,000 francs have been promised to anyone who will arrest or kill Victor Hugo. You know where he is; on no account let him go out."

This letter was written on December 3rd, and on that same day two more of Victor's friends were arrested and thrust into convict cells. One of these Representatives was ill in bed when seized; his name was Rigal, and he was the member for Gaillac. So ill was he that he was unable to dress himself after being thrust into prison.

Some barricades were being formed and fighting going on here and there, when a colleague named Bastide arrived at the committee meeting with six bullet-holes through his clothing but in the best of spirits. He came to report that all was going well.

Victor wished to return with Bastide to the barricade whence he came, but he refused to allow him to do so, replying, " Your duty is here, as our general, to direct. Anyway, you are in greater danger than we are, for you will be certainly shot if taken."

This statement was confirmed by Prince Napoleon Bonaparte, the son of Jerome Bonaparte, formerly King of Westphalia. While having no words bad enough for his cousin Prince Louis, this nephew and namesake of the great Napoleon endeavoured to restrain Victor by saying in his ear : " You are waging a battle which is lost in advance." He added : " You personally run great dangers. Of all the men in the Assembly you are the one whom the President hates the most. You have from the tribune in the Chamber publicly nicknamed him ' Napoléon le Petit,' and you can understand that that is not a thing that can ever be forgotten. In addition, you are he who has signed the call to arms. If you are taken you are lost. You will be shot on the spot."

The son of Jerome continued by generously offering to conceal Victor at his own house that night. He gave him the address, No. 5, Rue d'Alger, saying that there he would certainly be in safety, as it would be the last place where anybody would think of looking for him. This kind offer of an asylum was, by the way, not accepted by Victor Hugo.

Notwithstanding the warning to keep away, Victor hired a cab, and, confiding in the coachman, gave him his name and told him that he wished to go and visit the various barricades, one after another. The driver promised willingly to take him to the nearest points to each, and to wait for him and pick him up again to conduct him further. Moreover, the coachman added : " If you have no money you need not pay a sou."

Fortunately, soon after this worthy driver had taken Victor to the heart of what he called "the wasps' nest" he met his friend de Flotte, who conducted him to all those places where he thought that his presence would be useful. At all the points that Victor visited, and there were many barricades, behind some of which were many corpses lying, his presence was hailed as a good omen, his advice was sought and reports made to him. One prisoner brought before him was a police spy who was expecting momentarily to be shot. To this man Victor Hugo granted his liberty.

An amusing incident during this tour of inspection was the remark made by a street *gamin*, who posed quite as an authority on the art of building barricades. This street-arab observed sapiently: "The soldiers make barricades badly because they make them well. A barricade ought to be thoroughly shaky, well built it is worth nothing. The paving-stones composing it should be out of the perpendicular, so that they should fall down on the soldiers. Sprains form a part of the barricade."

One of the builders of a barricade requested permission to read a tragedy to the inspecting Representative. "We are making one," was Victor's apt reply.

At last it seemed as if the fire had spread; a general fermentation had reached the hitherto most peaceful quarters. In the old quarter of Les Halles, the quarter of the fish and other markets, there were cries of "*À bas Bonaparte!*" The police were hooted, the troops were hissed, and some of the regiments appeared amazed as the people cried out to them: "Carry your butts upwards." From the vantage point of the windows the women were encouraging the builders of barricades. The people had got powder; they had

supplied themselves with guns also. It seemed as if the Representatives of the dissolved Assembly were at last about to receive general support. Their spirits went up. Michel de Bourges, who had been badly taken in by Louis Napoleon by believing in his word, was particularly elated and beginning to talk about causing the President's head to fall on the Place de Grève. Victor Hugo, on the other hand, declared that the guillotine would be too good for him; he would not allow it, but should insist that the perjured prince should be compelled to live out a life of shame.

Meanwhile, the man whose fate was thus being disposed of was grimly preparing to indiscriminately sweep away life in every direction—the lives of innocent men, women, and children, all alike, it mattered not whose—so that universal terror were created.

Regiments and batteries were being quietly assembled around the Boulevards. The soldiers marched in absolute silence. Each one carried on his person three days' rations and six packets of cartridges. For every brigade an expenditure of 10,000 francs' worth of brandy had been incurred. At the hour of 1 P.M. on December 4th, 1851, General Magnan went to the Hôtel de Ville, where the reserve park of artillery was stored, and he did not leave until he had seen all of the batteries horsed and ready to march.

It was evident that some military operation out of the common was about to take place. A fact that strangely moved the crowds of people watching was the establishment of a large ambulance or field hospital, many hospital orderlies and great quantities of litters being collected at a building in the Faubourg Montmartre. "What is that for?" asked the crowd.

By two o'clock, between the Rue de la Paix and the Faubourg Poissonière there were no less than 16,400 men—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—all placed

in position. The people, watching with an uneasy feeling, wondered what on earth all these troops with all these generals could possibly be wanted for. For five well-known generals—no less—had been observed marching in at the head of their brigades. They were Canrobert, Dulac, Cotte, Bourgon, and Feybell. Moreover, why were there so many pieces of cannon placed in position with their mouths grimly pointing down every street? There were as many as eleven guns in one battery alone in the Boulevard Poissonière.

So extraordinary did the people consider the sight of the unusual military preparations taking place that, their curiosity being aroused, they crowded round to see. The side-walks were thronged, the windows of all the storeys of all the houses were crammed with spectators. The shop doors also were filled with people looking out, some with ironical, mocking glances, others with mere amazement; but at first with confidence.

Presently, however, this feeling of confidence, this ironical bearing, this astonishment, commenced to give place to uneasiness and alarm. The people began to think that there must be something underneath all this. But what could it be? And why should they fear? What could Paris have to be afraid of? Were they not all good Republicans, and was it not the land of France of which they were citizens? So they commenced to reassure themselves, and some of them to pass the time by deriding all these soldiers and by crying "*À bas Bonaparte!*"

The soldiers made no reply, but the swords remained unsheathed and the gun matches smoked in the hands of the gunners. Over all a thick mist commenced to fill the air.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MASSACRE

VICTOR HUGO did well for the world when he wrote his book, *L'Histoire d'un Crime*, for otherwise the heinousness of the crime committed would have been entirely lost sight of, being disguised under the euphemism of policy. Of the absolute correctness of the details of the *coup d'état* of Louis Bonaparte as therein recorded there can be no doubt. Victor commenced to set them down on December 14th, 1851, when he had arrived hot-foot at Brussels from Paris, to take refuge in a room retained for him by the devoted Juliette, who had preceded him. He finished the book on May 5th following, which was the anniversary of the death of Napoleon the Great, but from one cause or another, the book was not published until twenty-five years later. When on October 1st, 1877, *L'Histoire d'un Crime* was issued from the press, the Empire won for himself by Napoléon le Petit, as Hugo called the author of that crime, was already a thing of the past.

Many of us still living can remember the fatal day of Sedan, September 2nd, 1870, when the Emperor Louis Napoleon, who had gained his Imperial crown as the result of the massacre of Frenchmen, surrendered his sword and his army to William, the old King of Prussia. Bismarck, who had been the first that morning to receive the submission of Louis Napoleon, was also the cause of the war which deprived the son

of Hortense of his ill-earned crown, for it was by means of his faked telegram of Ems that he had made withdrawal of his master from the conflict an impossibility. To reward that master for his compliance, Bismarck presented him with the Imperial crown of Germany at the same time as that of France was falling into the mire from a dishonoured head.

And where to-day is that Imperial crown of Germany ? Has it not likewise rolled into the mud from another head, equally dishonoured ? How similar the fate of each ! Both of these crowns arose and sank in an horizon of blood : both were dissolved in an atmosphere of disgrace ! History indeed repeats itself !

The romantic writing of Victor Hugo we have already considered in these pages. His inventive powers as revealed in the weaving of his wonderful story, *Les Misérables*, have probably never been surpassed in the annals of fiction. To consider his style as a descriptive writer, as a historian, we cannot do better than select a chapter here or there from his *Histoire d'un Crime.* We will proceed to adopt this method by selecting his chapter entitled "*Le Massacre,*" which continues the sequence of events in Paris on December 4th, 1851.

We left the populace anxiously wondering what was the cause of the assembling of an army, consisting of the three arms in large numbers, in the vicinity of the Boulevards.

"Suddenly," to quote our author, "a window opened. Upon hell !

"Had Dante but leaned forward from the height of the shades, he would have been able to see in Paris the eighth circle of his poem : the mournful Boulevard Montmartre.

PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLEON IN 1839.

[*Facing p.* 166.

" Paris a prey to Bonaparte; a monstrous spectacle!

" The unhappy armed men grouped upon this Boulevard felt a frightful soul enter into them. They ceased to be themselves and became demons.

" No longer was there a single French soldier. There were one does not know what kind of phantoms accomplishing a horrible task in the light of a vision.

" There was no longer the flag, there was no longer the law, there was no longer humanity, there was no longer the fatherland, there was no longer France; one began to assassinate!

" The division of Schinderhannes, the brigades of Mandrin, Cartouche, Poulailler, Trestaillon, and Tropmann appeared in the shades, shelling and massacring.

" No, we do not attribute to the French army what took place in this melancholy eclipse of honour.

" There have been massacres in history, abominable certainly, but they have had their reason. The Saint Bartholomew and the Dragonnades are accounted for by religion, the Sicilian Vespers and the slaughter of September (1792) are explained by patriotism. One suppresses the enemy, one destroys the foreigner, crimes with a good motive.

" But the carnage of the Boulevard Montmartre is crime without why or wherefore.

" The wherefore nevertheless exists. It is frightful.

" Let us reveal it.

" There are two things established in a State, the law and the people. A man kills the law. He feels his punishment approaching. Only one thing remains for him to do—to kill the people. He kills the people.

" The 2nd December was the risk, the 4th the assurance. Against the rising indignation one sets forth terror.

" That Eumenides, Justice, stands petrified before

that Fury, Extermination. Against Erinnyes is displayed Medusa.

" To put Nemesis to flight, what a fearful triumph ! Louis Bonaparte had this glory, which forms the summit of his shame.

" Let us relate it. Let us relate that which history has not hitherto seen.

" Suddenly, at a given signal, a shot fired somewhere, by no matter whom, and the grapeshot is hurled upon the crowd. The grapeshot is also a crowd, it is death in little pieces. It knows not where it goes, nor what it does. It kills and passes.

" At the same time it possesses a kind of soul. It is premeditated and expresses a will.

" This moment was unheard of ! It was like a handful of lightnings falling on the people. Nothing more simple, it had the plainness of a solution ; the grapeshot crushed the multitude.

" What did you come there for ? Die !

" To be a passer-by is a crime. For what reason are you in the street ? Why do you get in the way of the Government ? The Government is a cut-throat. It has announced a thing and it has got to be done. It is necessary that that which commences must be finished. Since we are saving society, it is necessary to exterminate the people.

" Are there not certain social necessities ? Is it not necessary that Béville should have eighty-seven thousand francs a year and Fleury ninety-five thousand ? Is it not necessary that the Grand Almoner Menjaud, Bishop of Nancy, should get three hundred and forty-two francs daily, and Vaillant four hundred and sixty-eight, and Bassano and Cambacerès daily three hundred and eighty-three francs, and Saint-Arnaud eight hundred and twenty-two ?

"Is it not necessary that Louis Bonaparte should have daily seventy-six thousand, seven hundred and twelve francs? Can one become an Emperor on less?

"In the wink of an eye there was on the Boulevard a butchery over the length of the quarter of a league. The Hôtel Sallandrouze was levelled by eleven pieces of cannon. The cannon-balls riddled twenty-eight houses from side to side. Big holes were knocked through the Baths of Jouvence. Tortoni's was destroyed. A whole quarter of Paris was full of one immense flight and one terrible cry. Sudden death was everywhere! Expecting nothing, one was shot down.

"Whence came that death? 'From on high,' say the *Te Deum* bishops. 'From down below,' replies truth. From lower than the galleys, from lower than hell, it was the cruelty of Caligula.

"Xavier Durrieu was going into the Boulevard. He related: 'I made sixty steps, I saw sixty corpses.' He drew back.

To be in the street is a crime. To be in one's home is a crime. The throat-cutters go up into the houses and cut throats. They call that *chaparder* in murderers' slang. 'Let us *chaparder* everybody!' the soldiers cry."

When Victor Hugo has arrived as far as this in his narrative, he proceeds to give a long list of the names of people of all classes shot down, in their houses or in the street. A great number of these victims are shop-girls or milliners, working women of the poorer classes, or children. Some of these were butchered in doorways, others while opening or closing a window, being taken by surprise. Many women were cut down by a charge of the cavalry, being transfixed by

the lancers under a colonel of the name of Rochfort, who was promoted for his prowess in killing a number of nursemaids.

To resume, in Victor Hugo's own words:

"Must one continue? One hesitates. Doctor Piquet, a man of seventy, was killed in his drawing-room by a bullet in the stomach; the painter Jollivart by a ball in the forehead while seated at his easel; his brain splashed the picture! The Englishman, Captain William Jesse, just escaped a bullet which struck the ceiling over his head; in the bookseller's shop next door the father, mother, and two daughters were sabred. Another bookseller, named Lefilleul, was shot down in his shop in the Boulevard Poissonière, while in the Rue Le Peletier, a chemist of the name of Boyer was 'spitted' by the lancers as he sat at his counter. Before the Jouvin establishment there was a heap of corpses, among them an old man with an umbrella and a young fellow with an eyeglass. For three whole hours the Hôtel de Castille, the Maison Dorée, the Petite Jeannette, the Café de Paris, and the Café Anglais were the targets of the cannonading. The Raguenault establishment crumbled to pieces under the shells, while the cannon-balls smashed up the Montmartre Bazaar.

"No one escaped. The guns and pistols were fired point-blank.

"It approached New Year's Day, and there were shops full of New Year's gifts. In the Passage du Saumon a little boy of thirteen, flying before the company volleys, hid himself under a heap of toys in one of these shops. He was seized and killed. Those who killed him opened up his wounds with their sabres, while laughing at him. A woman said to me: 'Throughout the whole length of the Passage one

heard the poor little fellow's cries.' Four men were shot down before that same shop. The officer said to them, ' That will teach you to loiter about.' A fifth left there for dead with eleven wounds was carried to ' The Charity,' where he died on the morrow.

" They fired down into the cellars through the ventilators. A workman in leather, hidden in one of these cellars, saw through the skylight a passer-by wounded in the thigh by a bullet, seat himself gasping on the pavement, with his back up against a shop. Some soldiers hearing him gasp, ran up and finished him off with the bayonet.

" A brigade was slaughtering the passers-by from the Madeleine to the Opera House, another from the Opera House to the Gymnasium, a third from the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle to the Porte Saint-Denis.

" There was no fighting but sheer carnage when the 75th Regiment of the Line carried the barricade at the Porte Saint-Denis. Massacre radiated from the Boulevard into all the streets. It was an octopus stretching out its tentacles. Fly ? Why ? Hide ? What is the good ? Death runs behind you quicker than you can move.

" In the Rue Pagevin a soldier said to one passing : ' What are you doing here ? ' ' I am going home.' He killed him !

" In the Rue de Marais the soldiers killed four young people in their own courtyard.

" Colonel Espinasse was crying out : ' After the bayonet, the cannon ! ' while Colonel Rochfort screamed savagely : ' Prick ! bleed ! sabre ! ' while adding : ' It is an economy of powder and of noise ! '

" At the corner of the Rue du Sentier an officer of the Spahis with uplifted sword cried out : ' That's not the way to do it ! You do not understand at all ! Fire at the women ! '

"A woman fled before them; she was expecting to become a mother! ——!

Here we must break off from Victor's narrative, for it proceeds to relate a mere monotonous succession of horrible crimes committed upon a number of poor flying women, old men and children. One is reminded of the actions of the Germans in the cities of France and Belgium during the Great War. Here, however, it was a case of Frenchmen, at the instigation of Frenchmen, committing wholesale the most abominable murders of their own kith and kin.

At length, Victor Hugo went himself to witness the horrors that he has been describing above. He says:

"I wished to know what to believe. Certain crimes to be sworn to must be verified. I went to the scene of murder.

"In such anguish, from an excess of feeling one ceases to think, or, if one does think, it is distractedly. One only longs for an end of some kind. The death of others horrifies you so that you desire your own death. If only by dying one could do some good!

"One remembers deaths which have brought about indignation and upheavals. One's only ambition is to become an useful corpse.

"I walked on, thinking frightfully.

"I went towards the Boulevard. I saw a furnace there and heard thunder.

"I saw Jules Simon come to me; he who in these mournful days risked a precious life. He stopped me. 'Where are you going? What do you want? You will get yourself killed!'

"That is what I desire.

"We exchanged handclasps. I continued to advance.

" I arrive upon the Boulevard. It was indescribable. I saw that crime, that slaughter, that tragedy. I saw that rain of blind death. I saw fall around me in a crowd the distracted victims. It is for that reason that I sign this book, A WITNESS.

" Destiny has its designs. It watches mysteriously over the future historian. It allows him to intervene in the midst of carnages and exterminations ; but it does not permit him to die there. He is intended to relate them.

" In the middle of this inexpressible confusion, Xavier Durrieu ran up against me as I crossed the grapeshot-swept boulevard.

" ' Ah ! here you are. I have just met Madame Drouet. She is hunting for you.'

" Madame Drouet and Madame de la R——, two brave and generous women, had promised Madame Victor Hugo, who was ill in bed, to let her know where I was and to give her news of me.

" Madame Juliette Drouet had heroically plunged into that carnage. This had befallen her. At a corner of a street she had had the courage to stop and give vent to her indignation before a pile of dead. A cavalry soldier hurled himself upon her, aiming at her with his outstretched pistol. But for a door suddenly opened, behind which she took refuge, she was a dead woman !

" As one knows, the total number of deaths in this butchery is unknown. Bonaparte has concealed the number. That is the habit of those who commit massacres, they will scarcely allow history to keep count of those whom they have massacred. Those kind of figures have an obscure method of crawling away which quickly conceals them in the shadow.

" One of two colonels already mentioned in these pages has asserted that his regiment alone had killed

'at least two thousand five hundred individuals.' That would be one for each soldier. But we think that this colonel exaggerated. Crime sometimes boasts in the sense of blackening itself.

"A writer named Lireux, who was seized to be shot but who miraculously escaped, avows that he saw 'more than eight hundred corpses.'

"This extermination, which Captain William Jesse, an English witness, calls 'a fusillade out of the gaiety of the heart,' lasted from two until five o'clock. During those three frightful hours Louis Bonaparte carried out that which he had premeditated, and consummated his work.

"Up to the present the poor little conscience of the bourgeois has remained almost indulgent.

"'Oh, well, it was a kind of princely game, a sort of State rascality, a kind of conjuring trick on a large scale, that's all!'

"The sceptics said mockingly: 'It was a good farce that those imbeciles played.' They continued: 'Louis Bonaparte had suddenly become uneasy and felt the need to unmask the whole of his policy. Hence his message: *'Tell Saint-Arnaud to execute my orders!'*

"All of the pale corpses were left lying in the streets with pockets turned inside out. The soldierly murderer is an assassin in the morning—in the evening a thief.

"When night came there was enthusiasm and joy at the Élysée. Conneau has naïvely related what took place. The familiars were in a delirium of joy. Fialin called Bonaparte 'thee' and 'thou.' 'You will soon have to get out of that habit of familiarity,' Viellard whispered in his ear.

"He was right, for, as a matter of fact, this carnage made Bonaparte Emperor. He was now Majesty.

They smoked and drank like the soldiers on the Boulevards, for, after having killed all day, they drank all night; the wine flowed upon the blood. At the Élysée they marvelled at their success. They admired—went into ecstasies. What a capital idea it was that the Prince had had! How well it had all been arranged! How well it had gone off!"

CHAPTER XXIII

TO BRUSSELS AND JERSEY

With the wholesale shooting down of the people of Paris, their destruction by grapeshot, the sabre, and the lance, the supremacy of Louis Bonaparte was complete. He had now merely to consolidate his position at the head of the State, whose institutions he had destroyed with such a ruthless hand, while awaiting the vote by which the people of France were, by a majority of 7,000,000 to elevate him to the throne as the Emperor Napoleon III.

It was not likely that many would be found to vote against him ; he had worked the oracle too well. The printing-presses were controlled throughout France, thus those opposed to the Prince-President found no opportunity of giving vent to their feelings ; moreover, everywhere the vigilant Préfets de Police took every kind of precaution to ensure that the voting should go the proper way. There was, therefore, not any fear of what the result would be when at length, at the end of November, 1852, a *plébiscite* of the people was requested to decide in favour, or otherwise, of once again having an Emperor in France.

In the meanwhile that country was being swept as by a broom. The prisons were filled to overflowing with the deputies arrested at the time of the *coup d'état*, many statesmen were deported, many thousands of malcontents shipped off to Algeria. Two thousand

or so were exiled, while three hundred of the persons particularly obnoxious to Louis Bonaparte were transported to the particularly unhealthy climate of Cayenne.

Among those definitely exiled from the territory of what still continued for a time to be called the French Republic, was Victor Hugo. Long, however, before the decree of banishment had actually been promulgated against him, Victor had realised that the air of France was not likely to agree with him. He remembered that, although not used recently, there was such a thing as a guillotine still in the country, and while hidden for a few days with the M. and Mme. de Montferrier, with whom Juliette had installed him, that recollection gave to the agitator of the popular Republican party an uncomfortable feeling at the back of the neck. Victor did not wait in concealment in Paris a minute longer than was necessary. Juliette Drouet had already left in a hurry for Brussels on December 7th, 1851, having gone ahead in order to arrange for a lodging for her poet in that town, which she had formerly known so well.

She arrived in Brussels on the day following her departure, and awaited his arrival with the greatest anxiety. It was not, however, until the thirteenth of the month that Victor contrived to make his escape from Paris, disguised in the dress of a common workman. His baggage was very light. Indeed, it is said to have consisted of little else than a first draft of his famous romance, *Les Misérables*.

He arrived safely at Brussels on the following day, and there, in the hall of the Custom House, found his faithful friend standing, waiting to give him the heartiest welcome of her heart. How many hours had not Juliette already stood waiting in the neighbourhood of that Custom House ? How many prayers had she not offered up for Victor's safe deliverance

from the dangers by which she had left him surrounded ? How wearisome the six long days that she had herself passed in the Belgian capital alone !

All, however, was well that ended well. Juliette's *cher petit* Toto had arrived safely and, the saints be praised ! with his head firm upon his shoulders and as brimming over with genius as ever.

He had but little money, and his sensible friend therefore conducted him at first to an hostelry likely to be suited to his circumstances. In the name of M. Lanvin, Victor Hugo took up his quarters in the Hôtel de la Porte-Verte, in room No. 9. The prices here were moderate, but so also, it must be confessed, was the nature of the accommodation.

As Victor had arrived with a false passport, he was obliged to stick at first to the name of Lanvin, but soon he was so constantly being asked for under his own name that he had to give instructions at his inn to the effect that he was both Lanvin and Victor Hugo if anybody called.

His description of his lodging in a letter does not reveal any approach to luxury. " I lead the life of a monk. I have a bed as large as your hand. Two chairs with straw seats. A room without a fire. My total expense is three francs five sous a day, everything included."

As soon as Victor was installed he commenced to work, his next effort after *L'Histoire d'un Crime* being the trenchant verses called by the name of *Les Châtiments*, in the composition of which he was able to let off some more of the steam of his still-smoking rage, which had not had time to cool down since leaving Paris.

Victor Hugo had arrived in Brussels without even any shirts, wearing his oldest boots, with an old felt hat and worn clothing. Being, moreover, unshaved,

he resembled indeed the man of the working classes that he represented himself to be. However, he accepted the situation cheerfully, worried himself about nothing, and soon an old friend who held a post as Minister in the Belgian Government came to the proscribed man's rescue with offers of his own plentiful wardrobe.

The decree of the expulsion of Victor Hugo from French soil was dated January 9th, 1852, and just at that time he made up his mind to change his quarters. He was better off when he had established himself on the first storey of No. 10 of the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, which he roughly furnished. Here he worked away hard at *L'Histoire d'un Crime*, getting up early and going daily for his *déjeuner* to the Café des Mille Colonnes, or the Grand Café.

Unfortunately, Victor soon began to realise the discomforts of celebrity. Brussels was full of French people, all of whom had been proscribed at one time or another in the many changes of Government from the time of the French Revolution onwards. All of these people began to pursue Victor at the time of his luncheon hour, interfering greatly with both his repose and his digestion. He said in a letter: "I am going to be obliged on account of this to change my café for *déjeuner*. I cause a crowd and it worries me."

When from the Grand Café he changed to the Café de l'Aigle, he did so, however, with an uncomfortable feeling, for the Eagle which had been so famous on the banners of France at the time of the first Napoleon, was now again commencing to be flaunted by his nephew the Prince-President as the emblem of his House. The Republican exiles in Brussels expressed their astonishment that Victor should select an establishment bearing such a name as The Eagle as a place of daily resort. A more sensible friend, however, a

Colonel Charmas, was more philosophical. "Bah!" exclaimed the worthy soldier, "the eagle is the emblem of all great men, and on that account it belongs to M. Hugo just as much as to Napoleon."

Among those present at this time in Brussels was Alexandre Dumas, the famous author of the *Trois Mousquetaires*, who had declined to reside any longer in Paris under the *régime* of Louis Bonaparte and established himself in the Belgian capital. As Dumas was in the habit of giving frequent small entertainments, Victor was often able pleasantly to relieve the monotony of exile in the company of his literary *confrère*. Not, however, that he stayed late at these reunions; no, at ten o'clock he went back to his writing and worked away until midnight. Victor did not intend to waste any time until he had got his knife thoroughly well into the destroyer of the second Republic, therefore no sooner was *Les Châtiments* written, and *L'Histoire d'un Crime* finished, than he busied himself with the new work calculated to flagellate the occupier of the Élysée.

He had again changed his residence from No. 10 to No. 27 of the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. Here it was, to quote a French author, "that he wrote that vigorous lyrical pamphlet in which the pack of his angers hunted down the quarry of the new *régime*." This book was *Napoléon le Petit*, which won for itself a resounding success.

Concerning the way in which the first copy of this work was smuggled across the Belgian frontier into France, a strange statement is made by one of those Frenchmen proscribed like Hugo himself. In his work, *The French Proscripts in Belgium*, Amédée de Saint-Ferréol relates: "The first copy of *Napoléon le Petit*, forwarded in the inside of a magnificent codfish, was bought for the sum of eighty francs by a celebrated

banker who was well known as a collector of first editions of every kind."

This book had been copied out by the hand of Juliette, who had, however, returned to Paris for a time after welcoming Victor at the Brussels Custom House. She was now settled in a house not far away from the poet, but was very careful never to visit his residence. As a reward to Juliette for her labours as a copyist, Victor presented her with the ink-bottle which had served him while writing *Napoléon le Petit.*

An odd circumstance connected with this ink-bottle is that it fell into the hands of one for whom it was most certainly not intended. Upon it Victor had inscribed the couplet :

" La bouteille d'ou sortit
Napoléon le Petit."

One of Victor Hugo's friends among the proscribed fugitives in Brussels was a certain physician of the name of Melchior Yvan. He was of the family of the Yvan who had been a doctor to the first Napoleon. Being interested in the couplet on the ink-bottle, he asked Juliette for it, and she gave it to him. Some time afterwards, not only was the doctor allowed to return to France but taken by Prince Napoleon into his service. Seeing the bottle one day, the Prince forcibly possessed himself of it, and at that very time all copies of the book that had been written with the ink out of that bottle were being seized by the Parisian police.

The influence of the Government of the Prince-President was at this period very strong in Belgium ; so much so as not to render Brussels for long a very comfortable place of residence for one constantly employing his pen in the belittlement of the powerful chief of an allied State.

Victor Hugo accordingly thought that it would be as well for him to move on—possibly he got a plain hint to that effect from his friend Charles Rogier, the Minister of the Interior, who had come to his rescue with clean shirts when he had none of his own.

He left for Antwerp, and, after an affectionate farewell from Alexandre Dumas and numerous other friends who saw him off, arrived soon in London, feeling himself probably safer under the British than the Belgian flag.

What now put it into Victor's head to go to Jersey we know not, but to the Channel Islands he determined to go. There he would be equally sure of a safe asylum under the Union Jack as in England. Possibly the knowledge that other French Republicans who had escaped from the cruelties of the *coup d'état* had also made for this old section of Normandy, affected Victor's determination. However, we have already seen the inconveniences that the all too popular poet had suffered from the presence of too many of his fellow-countrymen, when in Brussels he had been compelled to fly to the shadow of the restaurant of The Eagle to escape them. Nor, it may be mentioned, had he for long continued to take his meals even there, for Juliette had as usual come to his rescue, when again his friends had followed him, to spoil his digestion.

She had installed herself in a house near him with a married friend, so she was not alone. While living at the table of this friend of her early days on the Brussels stage, Juliette hired her own servant, Suzanne by name. Of this *bonne* Suzanne, Juliette really made use to keep Victor Hugo's rooms in order. At eight o'clock daily she sent the maid with his early chocolate, which she had made for him herself, his clean linen which she had ironed for him, his socks which she had darned. As Victor was too careless or

too much occupied with his work to think of getting in his own coke or charcoal for heating his flat, this also Juliette would send by Suzanne.

After doing a bit of early marketing, when the hour of *déjeuner* arrived back she would send the *bonne* again with a delicate cutlet and some other dainty which her hands had prepared. The coffee, too, was then of the very best, since Juliette was very particular about her Toto's coffee, as she was about his rolls, his butter, and everything else.

When his son, Charles Hugo, arrived from France, and when Madame Hugo came to pay him a visit from Paris in the month of May, 1852, these visits only meant increased exertions on the part of Juliette, as from a distance she now acted as the benevolent housekeeper to three persons instead of to one only.

While thus watching over the man whom she held so dear, and even including in her careful attentions those who belonged to him, Juliette's own afternoons were but dull and lonely. For Victor when his modicum of daily work was accomplished, would be apt to go off for the rest of the day with friends for excursions to some neighbouring city or other point of interest, probably to be followed up by a convivial dinner with some Belgian friends. For Juliette Drouet there were none of these diversions available, but she remained nevertheless happy in the sacrifice that she made of her existence for the sake of him whom she worshipped as the most wonderful man in the world, for whom her love never changed.

It is not, however, to be imagined that during the course of these long, dreary hours Juliette could entirely banish from her mind the recollection of others like them ; yes, hours and days when she had waited for Victor and he had never come. And had she not, alas ! acquired the certitude that her fears in those

former days had not been unfounded, that he had in truth been deceiving her, while she had been left imprisoned at home like a linnet in a cage ?

She took out one afternoon from the receptacle where she had them carefully stored away, two bundles of letters ; the first that she untied was a packet of letters from Victor. She selected one of these and read it. Could anything be more charming, more convincing ? Its tender phrases ran as follows : " What would you that I should write to you ? What would you that I should say to you ? I am full of you. For more than eleven years have you not been my breath, my blood, my life ? What can I tell you that you do not already know ? Are not you the beginning and the end of all my thoughts ? Oh, my well-beloved, it seems to me that you have become myself, and that in speaking to you I am speaking to my own soul."

Laying down this epistle with a sigh, Juliette took up the other packet. It consisted of the letters that Madame Biard had treacherously forwarded to her, letters from Victor enclosed in a parcel sealed with his own seal.

She compared the dates, she compared the phrases, the expressions. At the very time that he had been writing to her that she was " his breath, his blood, his life," he had been writing to another woman in almost identically the same impassioned terms. The same pen had probably served to write to them both. Had Victor made a mistake, and placed the letter intended for one of them into the envelope addressed to the other it would not much have mattered, both were brimful and overflowing with love !

It was on a gloomy afternoon at the end of January, 1852, in Brussels, that after making this comparison of letters, a comparison so humiliating to herself, Juliette

felt as if she could never more believe in love, in humanity. Notwithstanding that she had recently so frequently risked her life for Victor Hugo in the bloody streets of Paris, she made up her mind that her dignity as a woman required that she should now allow him to go his own way, while she, too, would go hers.

Juliette wrote to Victor that she would go away, yes, "go without even once turning her head in his direction."

What was his reply? That he could not live without her. He bade her to remain.

Woman-like, she remained!

A few months later they were both in the island of Jersey, whither Juliette, either accompanied or almost immediately followed her Toto.

He stayed at first in an hotel at Saint-Helier called the Golden Apple, but before long removed to a house in Marine Terrace on the seashore at George Town. Juliette in the meantime had installed herself at a commercial inn where she was inexpressibly lonely. Never before had she dined alone at an hotel, and the place in which she found herself was the haunt of farmers and shopkeepers, whose company she found almost insupportable. She was glad soon to be able to change her place of residence to a kind of boarding-house, which went by the name of Nelson Hall. It was not, however, a very lively place to exist in. The proprietress drank and beat her husband, moreover, while continually hearing the sound of the breakers beating on the shore, Juliette was unable to obtain even a glimpse of the sea, owing to a high paling in front of her windows. However, she endeavoured to make herself happy by conscientiously copying out the lengthy manuscript of *L'Histoire d'un Crime.*

CHAPTER XXIV

VICTOR'S CRY FROM JERSEY

EVENTUALLY the constant disturbances caused by the drunkenness of her landlady and the thrashings that she administered to her unfortunate husband got upon Juliette's nerves so much that she could stand Nelson Hall no longer. Now, however, she was fortunately able to instal herself in an adjoining house, in which she was able to hire the first floor, which was spacious and comfortably furnished as a flat, with drawing-room, dining-room and kitchen complete. From her new residence she had a magnificent view of the coast, the beach, the seagulls, and the rocks. She was an exile, if but a voluntary one, as much as Victor, and it was her delight to point out to him the coasts of France visible in the distance, while endeavouring to persuade him that they would both find themselves back in their beloved country ere long. Daily he used to visit his faithful friend, and daily also would they walk arm-in-arm along the beach together.

After a while Adèle Hugo arrived from France to join her husband at "St. Luke's," No. 3, Marine Terrace, but her arrival made no difference in his habits so long as the pleasant summer weather lasted. When the season changed, however, and with it came the rough storms of the Channel and cold weather, Victor Hugo began to realise, as of old, that where Juliette was there was his real home. She knew how to make

him comfortable, while his wife had no idea of making things convenient for him in any way. Consequently, realising that a warmer fire and a more convenient writing-table was to be found awaiting him in Juliette's rooms than in his own home, Victor reverted to his habits of former days, and went daily to read or work in the company of the amiable woman who was also his secretary.

It must be confessed that it certainly was a strange existence that Victor Hugo led thus between his two homes ; it was one, however, that his wife and family seemed to accept quite as a matter of course. Nor was the head of the family the only one to visit Madame Drouet, by which name Juliette was generally known, for it was in Jersey that his two sons commenced first to frequent her house.

Juliette saved Madame Victor Hugo, who was but a poor housekeeper and liked to take things easy, from all the cares concerning the entertainment of her husband's friends and fellow proscripts, of whom there were quite a number to be found in Jersey. She began to give dinners to these people, many of whom were by no means of the class that she appreciated, and at these dinners, of course, Victor was always present, while his sons, Charles and François Victor, also often put in an appearance.

Like their father, these young men were by no means averse to a good dinner, and of that they were sure when Juliette was the hostess.

The dinners, from being at first given only twice weekly, at length became daily functions, and in this way was the giver of the feast assured that her Toto was provided with a sufficiency of proper nourishment. Since this was a matter of which she could not be certain when Victor remained at home, the increasing of the number of these love-feasts from two to seven

in the week, had been purely a matter of calculation on her part.

Nevertheless, she suffered greatly from the familiarity assumed by some of her Republican guests towards the man who, to her mind, should be treated, if not as a divinity, at all events as a demi-god. When she found these victims of the *coup d'état* too presuming to her adored one she endeavoured to freeze them by the stiffness of her demeanour. Victor Hugo, however, was too good-natured to resent the often offensive behaviour of men who were no better than communists. He accepted them on the ground that they were fellow-sufferers with himself from the arbitrary cruelty of Louis Bonaparte. Nevertheless, Juliette could not avoid complaining to him that street-porters who talked about equality were not at all in her line, and that she could never accustom herself to vulgar and middle-class mediocrity assuming to place itself on a level with his genius.

The sons of Victor she, however, took entirely into her heart, and that not only for their father's sake ; indeed, she could neither spoil them enough nor conceal her admiration of their talent. Both of them seemed to have inherited a fair share of their father's literary gifts, while Francois Victor had translated Shakespeare. Of this translation she expressed herself as being willing to make a fair copy as soon as she should find herself at liberty after finishing writing out Victor Hugo's last work.

This was a collection of elegiacal and lyrical poems to which he had given the name of *Les Contemplations*. They were remarkable for much beauty of expression, and published in the year 1856.

Not only did Juliette do everything in her power to show kindness to and render happy Victor's two sons, who had both suffered some months of imprisonment

in France on account of the views expressed in a paper which they had edited, but she also endeavoured to spoil their young sister. In the time of the roses it was to the girl Adèle, now a young lady, that Juliette sent the earliest blooms from her garden ; to her also were despatched the finest strawberries. Moreover, while Charles Hugo would sketch the designs, Juliette would embroider them beautifully on handkerchiefs for the young girl, for whose benefit also she would cut out and put together in book form the weekly instalments of the novels of George Sand appearing in the newspapers.

Nor was Madame Hugo forgotten by Juliette in her attentions to her Toto's family. Not only would she at times send her own servant Suzanne to her assistance when short-handed, but she occasionally was in the habit of despatching a savoury dish which she had prepared herself by the hand of her *bonne*. Usually this would take the form of a certain concoction which Juliette termed a *pot-au-feu à l'oie*, in the preparation of which she especially prided herself.

While indulging in these *politesses*, Juliette, who was discretion personified, never by any chance crossed the threshold of No. 3, Marine Terrace. Nor, later on, when in the island of Guernsey, even upon one occasion when asked by Madame Hugo to a Christmas *fête*, would Juliette attend. After many years, however, when both had become old women, she consented to visit Victor's wife in her own house.

Previous to this, however, Juliette had been present at a public dinner given in the poet's honour at Brussels, at which the strange sight was to be seen of the guest of the evening seated between the two ladies—Adèle Hugo being on his right hand and Juliette Drouet on his left. On this occasion Adèle insisted on Juliette's presence.

To return to the subject of the French exiles whom, to give pleasure to Victor, Juliette was in the habit of entertaining. She proved herself not to be without a certain amount of discernment as to their character in general, for all were not indeed to be trusted. It was one of Victor's troubles in Jersey that, although apparently surrounded by friends who were his compatriots, he could never be sure that there were not traitors in their ranks. The French Government had its spies in Jersey, and the fear of confiding oneself unwittingly to one of these was a torture not to Victor only, but to other proscribed persons who had made of the island their home when compelled to fly from France. They felt themselves surrounded by an invisible surveillance; they were aware that they were being watched, that traps were being set for their unwary feet. The letters that they sent to Paris, as also those that they received, were unsealed and read at the frontier. It is true that they were living in Jersey under the protection of the British flag, but they could not but remember that the new Emperor of the French had become the close ally of England. Therefore, the refugees, although protected by the institutions of Jersey, were constantly anxiously demanding of themselves whether they were not menaced by some unseen danger, and if some of the Frenchmen, apparently proscripts like themselves, were not in reality traitors.

One day these fears were proved not to have been unfounded. Owing to the jealousy of a woman whom he had deceived, an Imperial police spy was given away to those among whom he lived. Among the exiles none more openly professed his hatred and contempt of Napoleon III. than a certain Damascène Hubert. One day the certain proof was forthcoming that this wretch was in the habit of forwarding to the police

in Paris reports upon the proscripts with whom he was in the habit of mixing under the guise of friendship. Some of the French exiles, infuriated with the treachery of their comrade, had in a secret meeting determined to put Damascène Hubert to death. Victor Hugo arrived at the meeting just after this decision had been taken. All his life he was a strong opponent of the death penalty, insisting boldly on many occasions that none but God had the right to take away the life which God had given. He now argued that the life of the spy should be spared, but that he should not on that account escape all punishment. By the laws of Jersey, imprisonment for debt was permitted. Damascène Hubert owed several of them money; they would prosecute him in a court of law.

This plan was adopted, and before long the traitor was languishing in gaol. Here he would have had a much longer time given to him in which to meditate upon his misdeeds, had it not been for the Jersey law which compelled those who flung a debtor into prison to pay for his maintenance. For a number of months those from whom the police spy had borrowed money took it by turns to pay for his keep. At length, however, they came to the conclusion that, in addition to losing the money they had lent, to pay for the sustenance of the man who had borrowed it was not good business. They determined, therefore, no longer to throw good money after bad, and demanded the release from gaol of the rascal whom they had caused to be confined. This was accorded, but it is evident that the desperate men who wished to kill him gave Damascène Hubert such a fright upon his release that he was glad at once to fly from the island.

The first complete edition of Victor Hugo's work, *Les Châtiments*, was that published in Jersey. This

book of poems was inspired by indignation and patriotism. In the odes, the songs, and the satires the poet brands on the forehead the accomplices in the *coup d'état* of 1851 as much as its authors. He scourges the cowards who have thrown themselves on their knees before triumphant infamy equally with the priests who sing themselves hoarse with *Te Deums* raised in honour of the Cæsar whom they despise. He displays his pity for the victims of the bloody massacre, while lamenting likewise the unhappy fate of the miserable beings deported to die of fever at Cayenne.

While in brilliant verse Victor Hugo celebrates the virtues of those who have fought for honour and the right, he lashes the great ones of the Second Empire as no better than so many circus-riders or sword-swallowers. Throughout these avenging poems he holds up to infamy, and nails to the pillory of the scorn of the right-minded, the leading criminal in the recent drama of death in the Boulevards of Paris.

Nor are forgotten by him the bleeding dead piled into the cemetery of Montmartre, after being shot down like unsuspecting rabbits in droves in the streets, torn to pieces by grapeshot and shell on their own thresholds, picked off in the windows of their houses. The poet apostrophises these innocent victims who had been slaughtered unawares; he demands of them what they had to say to God concerning their fate, pictures them rising from their graves to accuse Bonaparte before his altars:

"O morts! que disiez vous à Dieu dans ces ténèbres?
On eût dit, en voyant ces morts mystérieux,
Le cou hors de la terre et le regard aux cieux,
Que, dans le cimetière ou le cyprès frissonne,
Entendant le clairon du jugement qui sonne,
Tous ces assassinés s'éveillaient brusquement,
Qu'ils voyaient Bonaparte, au seuil du firmament,
Amener devant Dieu son ame horrible et fausse,
Et que, pour témoigner, ils sortaient du tombeau."

Victor's *Châtiments* are divided by him into seven books or divisions, all dealing with the *coup d'état*, and each book having an ironical name or heading. The first and greatest claim of Louis Napoleon was that, by his barbarous action, he had proved himself the Saviour of Society; the second that he had restored Order. The poet commences the seven divisions of his work with the sarcastic titles: *Society is Saved*, and *Order is Re-established*. The following four titles are: *The Family is Restored*, *Religion is Glorified*, *Authority is Sacred*, and *Stability is Assured*. The name of the last constitutes a prophetic jest which is to be fated to come true in 1870. *Les Sauveurs se Sauveront*, *The Savers will take Themselves Off*. It is singularly applicable in the light of the disappearance of Louis Napoleon and the establishment of the Third Republic after the capitulation of Sedan.

This admirable book was calculated to reanimate the courage of all Frenchmen who, having been flattened out by the drastic eloquence of the grapeshot, the rifle-bullet, and the ensanguined steel, yet felt in the innermost depths of their conscience that they owed a blow for the defence of the sacred institutions of their mother-country.

Naturally, such a book was refused entry into France. The first edition was brought out in Brussels by Henri Samuel in 1853, but such was the scare established by the Emperor in Belgium that the publisher was ordered to omit many of the poems.

It had been in vain for Victor Hugo to protest, which he did in vigorous language, to the Belgian Government, for the fright inspired by Napoleon III., which was perhaps not inexplicable, was such as to cause the rulers of the little State to take very good care not to run the risk of offending their big neighbour.

The second edition of *Les Châtiments* was, however,

complete and was printed at Saint Helier, Jersey, in the same year. Almost immediately it was on sale in Geneva and New York as well as in London, where it was very highly reviewed by the *Illustrated London News*.

In spite of the efforts of the police to suppress the work, copies of this collection of poems penetrated into France in every conceivable manner. They came into the country in sardine boxes, in woollen pin-cushions, under the clothing of travellers, especially the dresses of ladies.

Plaster busts, which might be even those of the Emperor Napoleon III., would contain several copies, copies also were concealed under the mechanism of clocks. Short individuals likewise increased their height by a double sole on their boots, which double sole would contain a portion of the proscribed work, which entered France piecemeal when it was found too difficult or too dangerous to introduce it whole.

Nevertheless, such was the rage against Victor Hugo's latest work among the servants of the new Empire that it became a very unpleasant matter to enter France—travellers, both male and female, being stripped and searched at the frontier. Especially under suspicion were fishermen landing at St. Malo and other French ports, who were suspected of coming from Jersey, for their boats were searched closely, even the heaps of sea-wrack brought up by their nets on to the decks being turned over and examined.

All these precautions were of no use—*Les Châtiments* came in more and more. Soon nearly everyone had seen the book which caused such trepidation to the man whom its author had satirically nicknamed "Napoléon le Petit."

The determined efforts of the Imperial police to keep the work out proved how much the Emperor

feared its author, and, as a matter of fact, Louis Napoleon had indeed realised that Victor Hugo had made his home too near to the coasts of France. He determined if possible to get the unfriendly poet ejected from the island of Jersey in the same way as he had been previously cold-shouldered out of Belgium.

In Jersey, it must be confessed, the presence of Victor was not that merely of a candle hidden under a bushel. In the little island he continued to shine as a light to illuminate the principles of Republicanism, and the rays of his light spread far across the waters dividing Jersey from the Gallic coast.

Upon every possible occasion the refugees in Jersey assembled to make protestations, the speeches upon the celebrations of Republican anniversaries being reported in the foreign Press. Whenever a Frenchman died in the island his funeral was made an opportunity for further declamation. Thus, when one of the proscripts named Jean Bousquet was buried, Victor Hugo, in the name of all, pronounced an eloquent oration over his grave. It was very fine, full of lofty Republican sentiments, but very displeasing to the ruler of France. A month or two later, Victor pronounced a funeral oration over the remains of a brave woman of the people named Louise Julien, " banished and killed by Bonaparte." From her tomb, he declared, would arise the cry of denunciation of her murderer, to be heard by all humanity.

CHAPTER XXV

EXPULSION FROM JERSEY

As we have seen, Victor Hugo could not be kept quiet, but continued to elevate his voice against the Emperor, and its tones resounded far and wide.

The English Government had, however, found an useful ally in Napoleon III., and, being stirred up by his agents, was determined to mark its displeasure at the campaign being waged against him from the island of Jersey. In the House of Commons Sir Robert Peel gave vent to the following remarks :

"An individual has a kind of personal quarrel with the distinguished personage whom the French people have chosen for their sovereign and has informed the people of Jersey that our alliance with the Emperor of the French was a moral degradation for England.

"How can this concern M. Victor Hugo? If absurd rubbish of this kind should again be told to the English people by foreigners who find an asylum on these shores, I shall consider it my duty to inquire of the Secretary of State for Home Affairs if there is no possible means of putting an end to it."

Although until the year 1853 Louis Bonaparte was to be seen everywhere accompanied by Miss Howard, the fair Englishwoman whose favours he had successfully disputed in London with Kinglake, the historian,

he had never married that lady. In the above-mentioned year he turned Miss Howard into a countess with a French title, and married the Spanish beauty, Eugénie de Montijo, and in the early months of 1855 the Emperor and his bride were invited to Windsor as the guests of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

The English and French troops were fighting side by side at the war being waged in the Crimea when the Imperial pair landed in England. In this country their reception was accordingly most cordial, and the week passed with the Queen and the Prince Consort proved an unbroken success.

Everybody had been pleased. The Queen had invested Napoleon III. with the Order of the Garter; she had also given him a pencil-case. Her Majesty had found Eugénie beautiful and charming, and the Royal children had been fascinated by her.

Under these circumstances, a return visit to France had been planned, and thus it happened that in August, 1855, while the guns of the allies were still booming in the Russian war, the Queen, with her husband, the Princess Royal, and the young Prince of Wales, drove up to the Palace of St. Cloud.

A considerable part of the youth of the Prince Louis Napoleon had been passed in Germany, and, strange as it may seem, the son of Hortense de Beauharnais actually talked French with a German accent This fact seems to have delighted Queen Victoria, since the Prince Consort could enjoy himself in making German recitations with his host. In the Queen's diaries also frequent German words are used when referring both to the Imperial visit to Windsor and the return Royal visit to Paris. Oddly enough, one of the most remarkable persons presented to the Queen during a visit to the Palace of Versailles was that very Count von Bismarck who was, in the year 1870, to

occupy Versailles with his master, William I. of Prussia.

It is not to be imagined that these mutual Royal and Imperial amenities had escaped the attention of the French exiles in Jersey. On the contrary, they raged to think that the man of blood of the *coup d'état* had been welcomed in her own household by Queen Victoria, and that she had even deigned to visit him in return, to stay with him under his own roof as an intimate friend. Such an association seemed absolutely impossible, inexplicable!

Among the proscripts at Jersey were a number of men who had been journalists in France. At Saint Helier these exiles had established a newspaper which went by the name of *L'Homme*. Its editor was a man of talent named Ribeyrolles, and it included various vigorous writers among its staff of contributors.

Upon the occasion we have mentioned above, when Sir Robert Peel had made his remarks concerning Victor Hugo in the House of Commons, Ribeyrolles had replied to the threat of the Minister in the columns of *L'Homme*. In his article, the editor demanded if "England would allow herself to be misled by fear," if she would "ally herself with crime to hunt out those who had been stricken down by misfortune." He added that if the proscripts were forced to leave Jersey they would from the decks of the ships bearing them away into a second exile cry out the words: "There is no longer an England!"

Victor Hugo also took up the challenge, but answered it not to England but to the Emperor direct:

"I warn M. Bonaparte that I am perfectly aware of the springs that he is working, which are just of his strength, and that I have read with interest the things said about me in the English Parliament. M. Bonaparte has hunted me out of France for having

risen in arms against his crime ; he has hunted me out of Belgium for *Napoléon le Petit*. He will, perhaps, hunt me out of England on account of the protestations that I have made and still will make. Very well. A triple exile is nothing. America is good enough for me, and if it suits M. Bonaparte it will suit me also.

" I only warn M. Bonaparte that he will no more suppress me, who am but an atom, than he will suppress truth and justice, which are God Himself. I declare to the Second of December, in his person, that punishment will come, and that from France, Belgium, England, America, from the depths of the tomb, if the soul survives, as I maintain and believe it does, I will hasten the hour of the expiation. M. Bonaparte is right. There is, in effect, between me and him a *personal quarrel*, the old personal quarrel of the judge on the bench and the prisoner in the dock."

The people of Jersey, who had originally been very favourably inclined towards the French exiles, took no exception to either the remarks of Ribeyrolles nor those of Hugo. Worse than either was, however, that which was to follow and when, in the columns of *L'Homme*, there appeared an insulting letter to Queen Victoria upon the subject of her visit to Paris, the islanders felt that the French exiles had gone too far and outrageously abused the rights of the hospitality that had been accorded them.

It was a certain Félix Pyat who was the author of the insulting letter, which was couched in the following terms :

" Madame,

" As the price of the hospitality that we owe to the laws of your country, will you allow us to address you a few useful reflections on your journey.

You must not reckon upon the clemency of the people. Remember the fate of Charles I. You, Madame, have visited Paris, lunched at St. Cloud, dined at the Tuileries, supped at the Trianon. You have danced at the Hôtel de Ville, danced again at Versailles, wept at the Invalides, laughed at Saint-Germain. You have passed in review the pick of society: the army, the magistracy, the Church, the Bank, and the ladies of Les Halles—all the flower of the Empire, policy, eloquence, virtue, courage, good faith, and police. And all these fine people were decorated and polished up in their best to *fête* the friend of the household. You have admired the products of industry at the Exposition and everything worth looking at. You have been kissed on the knee by thirty Arab chiefs, below the garter, the *Times* says. Honi soit! and upon the hand by the Emperor: God save the Queen! You have put Canrobert in the Bath, drunk champagne and kissed Jérôme. You have felt the need of escaping a little from all these great men and all these fine things, and one morning, plunged in delight and admiration, no longer as Queen but a woman, a daughter of Eve, a good gossip of Windsor, you have engaged a cab by the hour with your goodman and your children, and gone off to take it easy for a bit among the shrubs and God's beasts in the Jardin des Plantes.

"You have tasted, savoured, all the delights, all the poetry, all the radiance, all the perfumes and all the forces of France. You would not have had too many had you possessed an extra sense! You have sacrificed everything! queenly dignity, womanly scruples, aristocratic pride, English sentiment, rank, race, sex, all, even to modesty, for the love of this ally!

"To-day that you are entirely refreshed and calmed down, that you are back 'at home,' and have

regained your *sang-froid*, your tea, your butter, and your reason, come, Madame, tell us what means this visit? What were you doing in the house of that man? Assuredly you did not go to see the Ruffian of the Haymarket, you, an honest woman, as much as a Queen can be one, perhaps!

FÉLIX PYAT.
ROUGÉE.
G. JOURDAIN."

The scandalous and ridiculous epistle was signed with the three names, and the remark about "putting Canrobert in the bath," referred to the Order of the Bath conferred by the Queen upon this general, a favourite at the French Court, who had for a time commanded his country's army in the Crimean war.

Upon the appearance of the issue of *L'Homme* containing this foolish letter the whole of the island of Jersey was up in arms. An excited crowd of several thousand persons assembled, and furious cries of rage were raised against the French exiles who had rewarded the hospitality of the island by such gross insults to the Queen.

"Sweep them into the sea! Lynch them! Hang the scoundrels!" was to be heard from a thousand angry throats at once, and after an evening meeting of indignation, presided over by the Constable of Saint Helier, a crowd rushed to attack the printing-offices of the offending journal.

Here the workmen printers, armed with bars of iron, barricaded themselves in and defended themselves with energy. An extremely heavy rain came on, which aided in the prevention of bloodshed not only at the office of *L'Homme* but elsewhere in the streets. One policeman, who did his duty nobly, actively restrained those who wished to break into the houses of the exiles and hang them.

The house in which Victor Hugo lived was isolated and an easy object of attack. He was warned to be prepared, but refused to arm himself or make any preparations to resist an onslaught. Of any attack, upon his person he was fearless, but he felt anxious lest his manuscripts should be destroyed. Fortunately, he was not molested, but a friend, disguised as a workman, carried off his manuscripts and hid them in a safe place.

Meanwhile, at the meeting cheers had been raised for the Queen, for the Emperor of the French, and the Empress Eugénie. It was also decided to suppress the journal of the exiles and to inform the proscripts themselves that Jersey declined to shelter them any longer.

A day or two later, the Constable of Jersey called in person upon those persons connected with the publication of the newspaper, and informed them that His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor would no longer tolerate their presence in Jersey. He gave them a week in which to make their preparations for departure. They left hurriedly on the morrow.

In England, meanwhile, there arose a considerable amount of agitation over events in Jersey, to which the *Times* devoted a leading article, becoming expansive on the subject of the revolutionary Frenchmen in the Channel Islands. In the course of this it remarked : " We recommend Lord Palmerston to read carefully the letter of M. Félix Pyat. We think that the Prime Minister has already menaced these incendiaries with deportation."

Victor Hugo at this time shewed a lamentable want of wisdom. Instead of being grateful for the fact that he and all of those refugees unconnected with the offending newspaper were left in peace, he thought fit to draw up an act of protestation and publish it. He complained of the expulsion of those who well deserved

to be expelled, in high and lofty language, resonant phrases, which accused England of traversing ancient British liberties by a *coup d'état* on the model of that of December. England had, he said, arrived at the stage of proscribing the proscribed. Another step, and she would become no more than an appendage to the French Empire. Proceeding, Victor made a direct address to the British Government, on the subject of its "powerful and cordial ally," M. Bonaparte. He continued by shewing that the said M. Bonaparte was guilty of the crime of high treason; that as a forsworn functionary of the Republic he had violated its laws, imprisoned its parliamentary representatives, hunted out the judges, exiled forty thousand citizens, deported to Africa, deported to Cayenne.

The crimes of M. Bonaparte included the sequestration of goods, which was theft, and murder. These crimes would in England be expiated upon the scaffold; they would be severely punished in France also, where the least that would be his due was committal to the galleys.

The angry poet ended up this accusatory letter of the principal ally of Great Britain with the words:

"Behold that which we maintained yesterday, and the entire British Press said it with us. Behold that which we shall continue to say!

"And now, expel us!

"Victor Hugo."

The signature of the writer was followed by that of thirty-six others.

When the wording of this declaration became known in England, there was a general outcry. With one accord, the Press expressed itself as being of the opinion that those who wrote thus were deserving of

punishment. The *Times* said that there was a French warship in the port of Jersey, and it supposed that it had been sent there to carry off the French exiles. The *Illustrated London News* declared that those persons who had been expelled from Jersey were deserving of the penalty of death. It would seem as if, in the general indignation, the inhabitants of Great Britain would have been perfectly contented to see Victor Hugo and his fellow proscripts handed over to the tender mercies of Napoleon III.

Fortunately for them, no such fate as this was, however, in store for those who had signed the manifesto. All that happened was that the authorities of Jersey informed Victor Hugo that he and the rest of the signatories had exceeded the limits of local liberty, and must in consequence leave the island of Jersey. The poet was requested to remove himself to some other place not later than November 2nd, 1855. He sent in reply an indignant message to the Lieutenant-Governor, to the effect that he could not be quick enough in getting away from a soil in which honour no longer existed. Victor added insultingly that he suggested that a report should be made to the British Government, which could pass it on to its superior, M. Bonaparte, to the effect that he had left the island.

The Emperor did not require to be informed. That he was perfectly well aware of what was taking place was evident from an announcement in the official *Moniteur* of October 26th, 1855, which mentioned that M. Victor Hugo had been expelled from Jersey.

CHAPTER XXVI

APOLLO AND EGERIA

It was on Wednesday, October 31, 1855, that Victor Hugo took the steam-packet for the island of Guernsey, where he landed at Saint-Pierre-le-Port or Peterport. Several of those expelled at the same time as himself went also to Guernsey, the others dispersed themselves all over the world. Being without money, the fate of some of these victims of the *coup d'état* was a sad one, but they had only their own folly to thank if they now found themselves cast homeless upon the world.

As for Victor, despite his big words to the Constable of Jersey on leaving, despite his excited message sent by that official to the Lieutenant-Governor, he left Jersey with real regret in his heart. He had there passed more than three years which had not been at all unhappy, and occupied his time in the execution of much good work. He had shewn his feelings when he celebrated the island in appreciative verse, of which the following is a pretty and descriptive stanza :

> Jersey dort dans les flots, ces éternels grondeurs,
> Et dans sa petitesse elle a les deux grandeurs,
> Ile, elle a l'Océan ; roche elle est la montagne.
> Par le sud Normandie et par le nord Bretagne.
> Elle est pour nous la France, et dans son lit de fleurs,
> Elle en a le sourire et quelquefois les pleurs.

During his residence in the island from which, but

for the bee in his bonnet on the subject of his bugbear, M. Bonaparte, he need never have been expelled, Victor wrote the whole of the poems called *Les Contemplations*, and a considerable portion of his wonderful, and often bewildering, work entitled *La Légende des Siècles*.

Victor found no hostility but a kind reception upon his arrival in Guernsey. There existed at the time of his disembarkation a curious jealousy of Jersey in this island. Therefore, the mere fact of his expulsion was a claim upon the sympathies of the inhabitants of the seagirt land of which he proposed to make his new home.

A description that he gave to George Sand of this, the second in size of the Channel Islands, was that of "a poor rock, lost between the sea and the night, bathed in the foam which leaves upon the lips the bitter savour of tears, and possessing no other merit than its craggy cliff and the patience with which it bears the weight of the infinite."

At first Victor Hugo installed himself at No. 20, Hauteville Street, in Saint-Pierre-Port, but from the moment of his first landing he was on the look-out for a permanent residence. Juliette Drouet likewise, who, of course, had not remained behind in Jersey, did not feel inclined to put up for ever with nothing but an inn or a temporary lodging. When Victor had left Paris he had, in 1852, sold off a great deal of his furniture. He had, however, then removed to Juliette's care all of those many *objets d'art* and pretty things that he wished to retain. She, on finally leaving Paris for Brussels, had left behind all of her own furniture and ornaments but now wished to bring her belongings to Guernsey at the same time as the things that she had been taking care of for Victor.

In the month of May, 1856, he was fortunate

enough to be able to buy a convenient and picturesque building, which, originally built by an English pirate, or owner of a privateer, was known by the name of Hauteville House.

While Victor took possession of this mansion, he hired, in the month of July, 1856, quite close to it, a little house for Juliette, which house was called La Pallue. Now Juliette was able to realise her dream. She sent her faithful maid, Suzanne, off to Paris to pack up and forward all of her own furniture and all of the articles of furniture and *bibelots* that were the property of Victor Hugo.

This Suzanne must, indeed, have been a treasure! She fulfilled her mission admirably, and everything arrived safely. With all of their own things around them, the exiles soon almost forgot that they were upon foreign soil. Juliette had for years past been bitten with her Toto's craze for collecting, and had been in the habit of haunting with him the premises of second-hand dealers and old curiosity shops. While gathering together for him, she had also picked up odds and ends for herself. In Guernsey the pair of collectors experienced the keen delight of once more having under their eyes all of the things that they had enjoyed picking up here and there and adding to from time to time. While Victor rejoiced in viewing once more his Japanese lacquers, Chinese vases, old chairs, and carved oak furniture, Juliette joyfully reinstalled around her the pots, plates, and soup-tureens for which she had always had a particular fancy. She did not, however, forget to let Victor know that without him all of her pretty things were as nothing to her, writing to him, in one of her "scrawls": "All of these dishes, all of these soup-tureens, these birds and flowers, all the Chinese things in the world are not worth the nail of your little finger."

When living in the island of Jersey one of the diversions of Victor Hugo had been found in table-turning and the study of spiritual phenomena, and he had long continued these experiences, although at times they had caused him a certain amount of alarm. In Guernsey he ceased this prying into the unknown and devoted all of his spare time to carpentry and house decorating both for Juliette and for himself. He purchased old Norman chests and having by now transformed himself into a cabinet-maker, transformed them into all sorts of other kinds of articles. He changed Juliette's former theatrical dresses into coverings for chairs or sofas or else into curtains ; he made overmantels for the fireplaces in some decorative design, and generally contrived to find a vast amount of amusement in what Juliette aptly described as " a poetic pot-pourri of art."

With this hobby constantly indulged in, the completion of the fitting up of Hauteville House was a lengthy affair, indeed, it took years to finish. Therefore it is by no means strange to find Victor writing to George Sand two years after buying that abode : " My house is as yet nothing but a hovel."

Long before that time Juliette's humble home had been arranged to her taste. There is no doubt that " the good Guernsey workmen " of whom Victor says that they think him rich and *exploiter* him, were given a good share of work upon her abode and made it thoroughly comfortable.

Not long after her entrance into La Pallue we find its occupant thanking her " *cher petit adoré* " in one of her characteristic epistles :

" I am touched, honoured, overcome at all the pains that you have taken during the last three months to make for me a little domestic paradise. Not a single

VICTOR HUGO IN OLD AGE.
From the painting by Bonnat.

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hammer-stroke has been given without your inspiration. But in thinking only to make a charming little house poetic and artistic, you have built a temple for your own divinity, in which my soul adores you day and night. All the things created here by your genius will be dear and sacred to me; I shall never touch them except with respect."

It is with pleasure that one realises the fact that, notwithstanding his infidelities—and we suppress the mention of many such incidents—Victor Hugo loved Juliette more than all else. He recognised her worth and was grateful to his dear companion, the woman of whom he himself said upon his return to France that she was the real author of all that he had written since the Second of December, because that then she had saved his life.

Feeling thus, it was his pleasure to make her happy in any way in his power, as much as it was hers to smooth for him as much as was in her power the inequalities of life. Each of this devoted couple, who lived in such intimate association for fifty years, formed the complement of the existence of the other. Without Victor, as she readily confessed in the first years of their union, Juliette would have deteriorated, gone morally to pieces. With him, that which she recognised in his nature compelled her to realise that, notwithstanding his human weaknesses, here was one far above others in charm, talent, genius, intrinsic worth, one worthy of the effort to raise the standard of her mode of life from what it had been in earlier days.

She made the effort nobly and succeeded. She resigned her Russian Princes, her riches, her luxury, for the sake of poverty with Victor Hugo. And she never repined, never looked back. On the contrary, notwithstanding the selfishness of his jealousy, owing

to which was severed her connection with the stage, Juliette never had aught but a feeling of gratitude to Victor, one that we find often expressed in her letters, where she tells him that he had saved her from probable degradation.

Her dignity as a woman was raised from the moment that she made up her mind to live for Victor alone, and although at times he tried her pretty highly, in her heart Juliette never regretted her decision.

When we feel tempted to smile compassionately at Juliette's entire devotion, her elevation of Victor to the pinnacle of a god before whom she feels herself bound in duty to bow her head with respect, it may be that we are wrong. Of all living, she knew him the best, there can have been nothing of him concealed from her. She knew all his lofty aspirations, recognised his noble qualities, the wish that was within him to help those unable to help themselves, to make all the world happy. Then, again, Juliette appreciated at its proper value his accomplishments, his immense knowledge upon all subjects. For who was there who knew so much? Read his chapters on architecture in *Notre Dame de Paris*, his articles on the ancient and modern institutions of Jersey and Guernsey at the commencement of *Les Travailleurs de la Mer!* Everything that he undertook Victor did thoroughly. He was acquainted with the classics and with various foreign languages; he knew all about the solar system, the stars; could discuss with you the theories of the astronomers of the past or the present, was as intimate with the Newton and Herschel of byegone days as with the still living Flammarion of to-day. History, ancient and modern, Victor had at his fingers' ends. And a thousand other things! How did he contrive to acquire so much knowledge? When did he learn it all? If Juliette Drouet, closely associated as she

was with the intimate thought of Victor Hugo, found him not only a genius but something more than a genius—a superman—surely we should not smile at her : she was not wrong !

For we must remember that all the knowledge stored up behind that vast brow had not been assimilated by a mere bookworm, a man who did nothing but read. On the contrary, it had been picked up, all in the day's work as he went along, by probably the most prolific and versatile writer of this or any age ; one who was continually producing from the recesses of his brain, one after another, plays, poems, romances, political pamphlets ; who was preparing also over a considerable period of his life innumerable speeches to be delivered in the National Assembly or at some public function.

Truly Victor was a wonderful man ! and, while Juliette recognised in him her Apollo, he was well aware of how much he owed her in return. Was she not, indeed, the constant solace of his life, the Egeria ever ready to his hand, to aid with inspiration in the sacred grove ?

CHAPTER XXVII

NOTRE DAME DE PARIS

It was many years after the commencement of his association with Juliette, that Victor Hugo wrote *Les Misérables*, a year or two before he met her that he wrote *Notre Dame de Paris*.

The difference between the two books is most marked. The tender touches in the former; the excessive humanity of Jean Valjean, the delicate confidence of Fantine, the loving attachment of Cosette, shew the influence, unfelt, perhaps, but present, of the tender, gentle woman ever by the author's side while he was writing what we may consider as his masterpiece. Had there been no Juliette Drouet, there would have been no *Misérables;* or had the book been written it would have been wanting in much of that powerful appeal to the sympathetic side of human nature that has proved its especial charm. That in one way Juliette was, with his own knowledge, an aid to Victor in his composition of *Les Misérables*, we know, since it was from her own early experiences that he was enabled to draw his graphic picture of the Convent, of the mysterious convent, of the Bernardines Bénédictines in the Rue Petit Picpus in Paris.

How different is the handling of *Notre Dame de Paris!* The architectural and archæological chapters apart, it reveals a set of characters that are *farouche*, wild, unnatural. Full of the fierce love that will stop

at no crime to gain its ends, it yet reveals the absurdity of a gentle woman, the emblem of youthful purity, ready to sacrifice unhesitatingly her virgin charms to one whom she has only seen a couple of times. And what is it that compels the passion of this maiden, to the extent that she is ready to make an absolute surrender of her soul, body, whole existence? Merely the fact that the swashbuckling cavalier to whose crude advances she yields with gentle passion wears gallant soldierly attire—gay military trappings.

"Absurd!" would have remarked Juliette. "Such women as La Esmeralda would not have been ready to go to their own destruction merely for the pleasure of looking at a dangling sabre, clinking spurs, a pretty uniform."

Juliette was not, however, at hand when the career of the charming gipsy was being elaborated from Victor's brain, and therefore he was able to lead her delicate steps along the road towards perdition according to his own unaided devices. And these displayed his unfortunate ignorance of the inner nature of refined womanhood. He did not know the Esmeralda he himself created.

The scene in which the book is laid is the Paris of the time of the sinister Louis XI., and this superstitious monarch is introduced in one chapter only. As so common in Hugo's books, witness the hundred pages or so of Waterloo in *Les Misérables*, this chapter has nothing to do with the story. It just tacks on in a sort of a way it is true, but its real object is to reveal the hypocritical nature of—the great enemy of Charles the Bold—the real maker of an united France. In this revelation a gruesome picture is given of the horrible iron cage in which the grim monarch is in the habit of shutting up his supposed or real enemies, like Cardinal la Balue, and leaving them to rot there for years.

This is the kind of theme in which Victor is seen in his happiest vein of narrative.

As the spider-like Louis crawls round the cage in the darkened room and, apparently quite oblivious of the piteous appeals for mercy of its occupant, haggles over every item in the bill for its construction and upkeep, all of which he has at his fingers' ends, we almost feel as if we ourselves are present. As he argues with his gorgeously-attired familiar, his barber and favourite, Olivier le Daim, we share the feelings of the two usually self-satisfied representatives of the great Flemish city of Gand. Like Guillaume Rym and Jacques Coppenole, we are unable to restrain a shudder in the presence of the tarantula in the poisonous surroundings of his own subtle construction.

Let us explore the grim humour of the narrator of the weird story; with him examine Louis XI. and study the loathsome king, as he himself studies his accounts and his cage—his iron cage, nine feet long by eight feet broad—in which a man, once one of the mighty ones of France, lies rotting.

"Olivier le Daim, or, as the people called him, Olivier le Diable, was reading aloud from his specifications.

"'The said iron, weighing in all three thousand seven hundred and thirty-five pounds, in addition eight great bands of iron with clamps and nails, weighing together two hundred and eighteen pounds of iron, without including the iron of the trellis-work of the windows of the room in which the cage is placed, the bars of iron of the door of the room, and other things. . . .'

"'That is a deal of iron,' said the King, 'to contain the lightness of one soul.'

"'The whole comes to three hundred and seventeen livres five sols seven deniers.'

"'Pasque Dieu!' exclaimed the King.

"At this oath, the favourite one of Louis XI., it appeared that someone woke up in the interior of the cage; one heard chains which scraped the floor noisily, and a voice was raised, feeble, as if proceeding from a tomb:

"'Sire! Sire! Mercy!'

"One could not see him who spoke thus.

"'Three hundred and seventeen livres five sols seven deniers!' replied Louis XI.

"The lamentable voice which proceeded from the cage had frozen all those present, including Maître Olivier himself. Only the King appeared not to have heard it. Upon his order, Maître Olivier continued his reading and his Majesty coldly continued his inspection of the cage.

"'In addition, there has been paid to the mason who made the three holes to receive the bars for the windows, and the flooring of the room in which the cage stands, because the floor could not carry the cage on account of its weight, twenty-seven livres fourteen sols. . . .'

"The voice recommenced its moaning: 'Grace! Sire! I swear to you that it was Monsieur the Cardinal of Angers and not I who committed the treason.'

"'The mason is pretty stiff!' said the King. 'Go on, Olivier.'

"'To a carpenter, for windows, window-sills and other things, twenty livres two sols. . . .'

"The voice resumed also: 'Alas! Sire! will you not listen to me? I protest that it was not I who wrote the thing to Monseigneur de Guyenne but Monsieur the Cardinal La Balue!'

"'The carpenter is dear,' observed the King. 'Is that all?'

"'No, Sire. To a glazier, for the windows of the said room, forty-six sols eight deniers.'

"'Have mercy, Sire! Is it not sufficient that all my goods have been given to my judges, my plate to Monsieur de Torcy, my library to Maître Doriolle, my tapestry to the Governor of Rousillon? I am innocent. For fourteen years I have shivered in this iron cage. Have pity, Sire! You will find it again in heaven.'

"'Notre Dame!' exclaimed the King. 'What an outrageous cage!' He snatched the accounts from Maître Olivier and began adding up on his fingers, while examining turn by turn the paper and the cage.

In the meanwhile sobs were heard from the prisoner. It was melancholy in the shade, and the faces turned pale as they looked at one another.

"'Fourteen years, Sire! Already fourteen years from April, 1469.

"'In the name of the Holy Mother of God, Sire, listen to me! All that time you have enjoyed the heat of the sun. I, miserable wretch, shall I never see the daylight again? Mercy, Sire! be merciful. Clemency is a royal virtue. For that matter, Sire, I did not betray your Majesty, it was Monsieur d'Angers. And I have on my leg a heavy chain and a great iron ball at the end of it, far heavier than there is any need for. Oh! Sire! have pity upon me!'

"'Olivier,' said the King, shaking his head, 'I notice that they reckon the hogshead of plaster at twenty sols when it is only worth five. You will refer this account.'

"He turned his back on the cage and began to leave the room. The miserable prisoner, at the withdrawal of the torches and the noise, knew that the King was going.

"'Sire! Sire!' he cried in despair.

" The door closed. He saw no more, heard nothing more than the harsh voice of the gaoler, singing at him the song :

" Maître Jean Balue
A perdu la vue
De ses évêchés ;
Monsieur de Verdun
N'en a plus un ;
Tous sont dépêchés."

" The King in silence returned to his retreat, and his cortège followed him, terrified at the last moanings of the condemned man.

" Suddenly his Majesty turned to the Governor of the Bastille.

" ' By the way,' said he, ' was there not someone in that cage ? '

" ' Pardieu, Sire ! ' replied the Governor, astounded at the question.

" ' Who was it, then ? '

" ' Monsieur the Bishop of Verdun.'

" The King knew it better than anyone. ' Ah ! ' said he with an air of only having just thought of it. ' Guillaume de Harancourt, the friend of Monsieur the Cardinal La Balue. A good devil of a bishop ! ' "

From the above specimen of Victor's methods in writing historical romance which approaches to actual fact, it must be conceded that he is hard to equal, difficult to beat. The fault of *Notre Dame de Paris* consists in the fact that it is unequal. The narrative, while terrifying, appalling, fails upon the whole to convince ; it contains certain incidents, certain situations, which to a reader of any intelligence are frankly impossible.

We need not, however, particularise, we are merely considering the work as a whole.

The primary work of the author would appear to have been that of an antiquary seeking to revive for modern times the glories of the ancient monuments of Paris. Accordingly, he searches out and describes all the old corners of the wonderful Cathedral of Notre Dame, and does so, moreover, with the skill of one deeply versed in architectural lore.

The book was written to order, having been promised to a publisher named Gosselin for the end of the year 1829.

When the Revolution of July, 1830, took place by which Charles X. lost his throne, Victor Hugo also had a loss, the notes for the material for three whole chapters disappearing when, in a great hurry, he scuttled out of his house, which was in the middle of the fighting zone. The book had to be written without them, but they were fortunately recovered in time for incorporation in the eighth edition of *Notre Dame de Paris*. Of this they formed the chapters headed *Impopularité*, *Abbas Beati Martini*, and *Ceci Tuera Cela*.

As Victor Hugo had got behindhand with his work, the impatient M. Gosselin insisted upon having the book by February, 1831. Five and a half months Victor Hugo had left to him in which to complete his contract, and he determined not to be behindhand. He bought a bottle of ink and, as his new lodgings were cold, a woollen vesture, which, he said, enveloped him "from the neck to the big toe." For fear that he should be tempted to go out, he locked up all his clothes and imprisoned himself to write his book, only leaving his table to eat and sleep.

Beyond the primary artistic idea of the book, which concerns the splendid architecture of the cathedral, there is in *Notre Dame de Paris* a thrilling drama unrolled, of which the sacred edifice is itself the

setting. The main idea of the book is Fatality, the Greek word for which the author declared that he had in his archæological researches discovered carved upon the wall of a cell in one of the towers.

Although exciting, a book of which fatality forms the *motif* can hardly be expected to be a happy one, and, indeed, as the reader peruses its powerful pages he finds little happiness but much passion and bitter disappointment.

The principal characters are Claude Rollo, the Archdeacon of Notre Dame, his brother Jehan Rollo, a scholar; Quasimodo, a misshapen dwarf, whose life had been preserved from infancy by the priest, and La Esmeralda, a kind of Spanish gipsy, although her actual origin is uncertain. Other characters are Trouillefou, the king of the vagrants, and Pierre Gringoire, a young and out-at-elbows author, who owes all the erudition that he possesses to the gloomy Archdeacon Rollo.

Another protagonist, who proves of considerable importance in the unfolding of the dramatic story, is a flashy captain of the Guard, whose first name is Phœbus. It is a name that the heroine of the tale learns all too easily for her happiness. Especially unfortunate for her proves the circumstance that, quite unaware of what her doing so may entail, she teaches her performing goat how to pick out and arrange the letters spelling the captain's name. When, all unbidden, the goat performs this trick in a court of law, it is considered a clear proof of sorcery on the part of its mistress.

Of all these characters, there is established in the mind of the reader keen interest in the dwarf Quasimodo, who is the bell-ringer of the cathedral, and deep sympathy for La Esmeralda, the gipsy girl.

Attired in a variegated petticoat, with a golden

bodice above it, she frequently dances in the open space before Notre Dame; the performing goat, which has gilded horns, lying upon the Persian carpet at her feet. With beautiful arms rounded above her head, as she waves her tambourine and springs lightly with her tiny feet into the air, her shapely grace forms an ideal of youth and beauty. The colouring of her face and neck is of a lovely brown, her lips are flashing carmine, her teeth ivory. Her eyes are black and flash lightnings.

Esmeralda forms a picture all too alluring for the susceptible heart of man. It is, alas! fatality that it should be beheld too often from the cathedral doorway by the immaculate priest, Claude Rollo, as the dwarf also views the same delicious picture from the belfry towers; fatality, again, that Captain Phœbus de Châteaupers, clad in his splendid uniform, should arrive suddenly to rescue Esmeralda as the dwarf, who has seized her, is bearing her away. Fatality it is once more, that, after on many occasions cursing Esmeralda as a witch, at the moment when at last she recognises her as her daughter her mother has to relinquish the lovely young creature into the brutal arms of the hangman.

It cannot be said, however great its value as the history of a day when torture, cruelty, and death were the rule in France, that *Notre Dame de Paris* is a healthy book. The scene of the flogging, while lashed to the wheel, of the unhappy dwarf, who is afterwards to prove so good to Esmeralda, is a terrible one. Beautiful, however, is her act of courage, when the young girl ventures up before all the people to take a cup of water to the wretch writhing in his agony for the crime of having attempted her abduction.

There is a splendid picture of street fighting, when all of the army of the vagrants, to which band now

belong the educated bookman Gringoire and Jehan the Archdeacon's brother, attempt to storm the cathedral. Sad, however, is the end of the volatile Jehan, flung whirling down from the towers of Notre Dame that he has scaled, by the powerful dwarf, whom he has first wounded with his crossbow.

The deeds of heroism performed by Quasimodo in single-handed defence of the cathedral against the savage brigands are marvellous and splendidly portrayed. They are, however, inspired by his protective love for the gipsy girl, whom he has for weeks past been hiding in a small room in the higher part of the edifice, and while there defending her even from the frenzied love of his own preserver, the priest Claude Rollo. Furiously and skilfully the dwarf, perched high upon the towers, defends the great front doors, which he has barred. He hurls down a huge beam which kills many, he pours down streams of molten lead which destroy the vagrants' king as he is directing his followers in the use of the fallen beam as a battering-ram.

Fatality has willed it that the magnificent fight of the dwarf, alone against hundreds, is all a mistake. He imagines that in saving the sacred edifice of Notre Dame he is saving the gipsy girl, installed in her room in one of the towers, from the fury of the attacking vagrants. Quasimodo is indeed mistaken. The vagrants are Esmeralda's friends, and would save her from the powers of the law, which have decreed, with the King's sanction, that she is to be torn from the sanctuary afforded by the cathedral. She has been found guilty of killing Phœbus, when, in the moment of supreme passion, they had been locked in each other's arms. She is accused also of sorcery. Having been put to the torture of the boot, Esmeralda has

confessed all, even that she has slain the man she loved.

Claude Rollo, the priest, it is who, from furious jealousy, has thrown himself from behind like a tiger upon Phœbus and stabbed him in the neck, covering Esmeralda with her lover's blood. He is not, however, dead, although all suppose him to be so as he has disappeared, while the law has made no effort to find his body.

Quasimodo, in protecting Esmeralda, causes her death. While he fights the bandits, Claude Rollo persuades her to fly from the cathedral to escape from execution. When he madly pleads his despairing love, assuring her of safety if she will be his, she refuses with scorn and loathing.

"Rather that gallows!" she exclaims, pointing to the gibbet near which they are passing in the effort to escape.

The priest, enraged, dashes the poor young creature to his feet and leaves her to betray her to the King's executioner.

Tristan l'Hermite, the King's favourite and head hangman, finds Esmeralda hidden in the cell in which her mother has as a penance had herself walled in for years. It is in the open place in front of the cathedral, and it had been from this spot that she had been in the habit of cursing the gipsy girl as she danced. In her flight, after Claude Rollo had left her at his feet while he went to seek his vengeance, she begs this woman, her enemy, to save her. A baby shoe which she wears as a talisman in a little bag round her neck proves to be the fellow to a similar shoe preserved by the half-demented woman in the cell. They are mother and daughter! Breaking the bars of her window, the mother drags Esmeralda in shortly before the arrival of the executioners. There is a terrible

scene, and Esmeralda almost escapes detection when the mother lies and vows that although she has seen the gipsy girl, she has left the open space and gone down a side street. At the last moment, accident reveals Esmeralda's presence. She is torn from the arms of her mother, who falls down dead as the poor girl is dragged away to the gallows close by.

From the high gallery between the towers of Notre Dame both the priest and Quasimodo watch the dying convulsions of the innocent young creature. At the supreme moment when Esmeralda's struggles cease, the dwarf observes a hideous demoniac laugh upon the archdeacon's face. The bells that he has loved so well have deafened Quasimodo, but he understands that look. For had he not once torn the priest at dead of night from the bedside of the gipsy girl in the room in the tower, and had he not given to Esmeralda a knife with which to defend herself? Quasimodo knows intuitively that the man who had been his own preserver is the destroyer of the girl whom he himself has watched over so sacredly night and day.

In fury he hurls himself upon the priest and pushes him over the parapet, but a projecting gutter saves the archdeacon's fall, and from this he hangs suspended by his hands. He hangs thus miserably, and looking up sees above him the face of the dwarf glaring down, who could save him if he would, for but a few feet separate the pair. Quasimodo, however, sees the dreadful gallows down below, and on it, swinging, twirling in the breeze, the slight, piteous figure of Esmeralda. Rather than save Claude Rollo, were hell flaming beneath his feet, he would let him drop.

He drops!

Here the terrible story ends, save that it is recorded that Quasimodo shared Esmeralda's tomb,

where, at a later date, their two skeletons were found locked together in an inextricable embrace.

It was a tale which, at the time of its publication, received the following public criticism from Jules Janin, who for many years was one of the author's most intimate friends :

"*Notre Dame de Paris* is a terrible and powerful narrative, which the mind recalls with terror, as if of a horrible nightmare."

Few who have read the book would differ from the opinion recorded by M. Jules Janin.

CHAPTER XXVIII

LIFE AT GUERNSEY

THE renown of *Notre Dame de Paris* proved to be a windfall for the vergers and bell-ringers of the ancient cathedral; the curiosity of thousands being aroused, visitors arrived daily who wished to be shown all over the sacred edifice from top to bottom. It can easily be imagined that the friends of the author of the book of the day were only too anxious to obtain him personally as their cicerone, and thus it happened that one day, accompanied by several ladies, Victor Hugo entered the building and ascended one of the towers.

Instantly he was pounced upon by a voluble bell-ringer. Opening the door of a small cell-like chamber leading off the upper gallery, the man ushered the party in, and rattled off the story with which daily he was wont to entertain the unwary visitor.

"Here," said he, "you behold the very cell in which the illustrious Victor Hugo wrote his *Notre Dame de Paris!* He was a wonderful worker! He never came out of that door until he had finished his task. Look! Here is his table. Here is his chair! There his bed! He was a very small eater, hardly cared if he had any food or no. Just what we had ourselves, he said, was quite enough for him."

"My friend," replied Victor politely, as he placed a good tip in the bell-ringer's extended palm, "I cannot be too grateful to you for these *historical* details!"

Another story concerning Victor probably was the result of malicious misrepresentation, but it is worth relating as the mere fact that it could be told, and, moreover, be believed in, gives an idea of the consideration in which he was held in Paris at a comparatively early date in his career.

At the time when he first became attached to Juliette Drouet the author inhabited a nice house in the Place Royale, in which house it will be remembered that Juliette visited him, to find him living in a condition of personal discomfort which she set herself to work to rectify.

The house contained a fine drawing-room, in which was one of those splendid old chimneypieces which delighted the heart of Hugo. This chimneypiece he had embellished with scarlet draperies, while fine Chinese vases adorned the mantelpiece. To the left of this chimneypiece there was an elevated daïs, also ornamented by artistic hangings, while at the back was a flag which had been brought in the year 1830 from the palace of the Dey of Algiers, and in front of the flag an oriental divan. The story went that Victor Hugo, puffed up with pride, was in the habit of throneing it upon this daïs. Upon a raised stage he had installed an ornamental fauteuil. Seated in this, Victor Hugo would, like some Emperor or the Pope, extend his hand to be kissed, while blessing his adorers kneeling on the steps at his feet.

While on the subject of anecdotes concerning Victor Hugo, it is worth while recording one which shows his remarkable memory. When, in the year 1874, he published his romance, *Quatrevingt-treize*, a work in three volumes dwelling upon the events of the French Revolution, the editor of *Le Petit Journal* set to work to review it upon the day of publication. Not having received the second volume, this gentleman, whose

name was Escoffier, hurried off to the residence of M. Paul Meurice, where he found the author present.

While handing him the second volume, Victor Hugo, whom he had never met, remarked :

" It is a long time since I have known you, M. Escoffier. You once said in a little journal of Toulouse, speaking of *Les Misérables* : ' *Les Girondins* has been the work of an epoch ; *Les Misérables* may perhaps be the work of a century.' "

These were the exact words which M. Escoffier had written eleven years earlier. This one instance is sufficient to prove Victor's prodigious memory. There is no reader of his works who has not been surprised at his wonderful powers of recollection as exemplified in a thousand ways. It is, indeed, this remarkable gift which explains to a great extent the power of his works.

Another story serves to reveal at what money value was considered the mere name of the author. After his return from his exile, Victor Hugo was living in the Avenue d'Eylau, which name the Municipal Council of Paris ordered to be changed to the Avenue Victor Hugo in his honour. He wished to buy the little hôtel in which he resided from its owner, the Princesse de Lusignan, who was his next-door neighbour. Its outside value was of about 100,000 francs, which sum would not have ruined him. To Victor's astonishment, the Princesse had the effrontery to demand of him the extortionate price of 750,000 francs.

" Seven hundred and fifty thousand francs ! " repeated the author, open-mouthed.

" Why, it's nothing," replied the Princesse de Lusignan.

" Nothing ! "

" Certainly ; only consider the fact that this house has had the incomparable honour of being inhabited by Victor Hugo."

He replied with a smile : " Well, for my part, Madame, I am not rich enough to buy a house which has been lived in by Victor Hugo."

The poet bought, however, another house not far away in the same avenue surrounded by a little park planted with fine trees, which served his purpose equally well and had the merit of not costing so much. Of all the different houses in which he lived in the course of his life, in none did Victor take more pleasure than Hauteville House, in Guernsey. That island also, which was his residence for fifteen years, was the place in which he felt the least his exile from France. In fact, in Guernsey he found a second home.

From the commencement of his stay in the island Victor Hugo began to make himself acquainted with everything belonging to it. Its inhabitants, its rocks, its beaches, its headlands and bays, the shoals lying out at sea, the nature of the shipping and fishing-boats ; all of these things were the object of his study, so that he soon knew as much about Guernsey as one who had been born and lived there all his life.

This intimate study it was which made it possible for him to write that thrilling romance of the Channel Islands, *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*.

Hauteville House became a sort of asylum for all of those French men of letters who wished to find a quiet corner in which to write a book. Many came there to take advantage of Hugo's hospitality. He reserved for them a chamber which he termed jocularly " The Raft of Medusa." One of those who occupied Medusa's Raft of Refuge for a considerable period was Balzac. Nor were men the only guests of Victor, for he was fond of the animal world, and especially of dogs. He had a dog named Ponto, which he has described as being a beautiful, but not very faithful, spaniel. The house dog, which was in his

opinion both brutal and tender in disposition, went by the extraordinary name of Chougna. Lux was the favourite pet of his sons, while the greyhound Sénat, which had been brought from Belgium, was a graceful and beautiful creature. In case that this greyhound should wander from home and be lost, its owner wrote and had engraved upon its collar the following poetic couplet :

" Je voudrais qu'au logis quelqu'un
Me ramenât
Mon état ? Chien. Mon maître ? Hugo.
Mon nom ? Sénat."

The owner of all these animals was evidently of the same opinion as Madame de Staël, when she wrote her well-remembered phrase : " *Plus j'ai connu les hommes, plus j'ai aimé les chiens.*

An immense amount of work was accomplished in Guernsey, and it was in this pleasant asylum from the storms of a previously agitated existence that Victor Hugo completed the writing of *Les Misérables*, which he had already commenced before he was forced to fly to Brussels at the time of the December massacres.

In August, 1861, which was a year before the book was published, Paul Foucher, the author's brother-in-law, had written demanding permission to dramatise the work, when Victor replied that his son Charles had already formed that intention ; but he added that there might be perhaps material for more than one drama. In this letter he mentioned what was his original intention concerning the great romance, saying : " The work will appear in three parts, which will each have a special title and be like three novels. However, the whole work gravitates around one central figure. It forms a kind of planetary system around one giant soul, which sums up all that there is of present social misery."

The book had originally been announced to appear in only two volumes, but in Guernsey Victor Hugo put an immense amount of work upon it and thus expanded *Les Misérables* to ten volumes. In this form it appeared upon the same day in Paris, Brussels, Leipzig, London, Milan, Madrid, Rotterdam, Warsaw, Buda-Pesth, and Rio de Janeiro. The name of the lucky publisher in Paris was Pagnerre, while Lacroix produced the book in Brussels. Between April 3rd and 5th, 1862, Pagnerre sold the whole of the 7,000 copies which he had first had printed. He issued a new edition on April 17th, and immediately sold 8,000 more. The number disposed of in Brussels at the same time was 12,000 copies, in Leipzig 3,000. Twenty-five thousand nine hundred copies of Victor Hugo's wonderful book were sold in the other places mentioned above almost immediately, while pirated editions soon were being published also. Illustrated editions commenced to appear at once in Paris, and soon the sale of *Les Misérables* had to be counted, not by thousands, but by hundreds of thousands of copies.

The voice of Victor Hugo, raised in Guernsey, was heard vibrating throughout all the world. Never was there such a success as this heartfelt cry for pity for all weak crushed down by the weight of destiny, this appeal for sympathy for those who had fallen. The result of his triumph was not to render Victor idle ; on the contrary, he was soon keeping Juliette fully occupied in copying out for him the poems published under the pretty title of *Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois* and a book called *William Shakespeare*, which was an extraordinary study of the great English poet.

Previous to this, Victor Hugo had enjoyed another triumph, one not world-renowned like the success of his books, but purely local and confined to the Channel Islands. The island of Jersey, which a few years

earlier had ejected him from its coasts with ignominy for the crime of being too outspoken, now begged him to return to its shores for the purpose of raising his voice once more. Time certainly brings strange revenges, and this was one of them!

It was, indeed, a singular event for the inhabitants of Jersey to be *en fête* in 1860 on account of the return of their former guest. Every wall was decorated with the announcement: "Victor Hugo Has Arrived!"

What had happened was that five hundred notables had addressed to him a solicitation to come to Saint Helier and make an address. Throughout the whole of England in that year subscriptions were being raised to get money in order to aid Garibaldi in his movement for the liberation of Italy. Jersey, knowing that the cry of liberty was the one nearest to the poet's heart, had begged him to come and speak on behalf of this cause. Willingly he had responded to the appeal to raise his voice on behalf of liberty. In the midst of the most profound emotion, in the presence of an immense assembly which thrilled at his words, Victor Hugo made a touching picture of enslaved Italy. His fervid peroration was an immense success. The very people who had denounced him formerly and hounded him out of the island were now the most tumultuous in their applause, as he solemnly prophesied that France and England, hand in hand, would, with the aid of Garibaldi, restore to Italy her freedom of old, revive her former glories.

Great indeed was the triumph of the French exile to find himself treated once more by the repentant people of Jersey as their friend; as a friend, moreover, whom they delighted to honour.

At about the time when, in 1863, the applause of the readers of *Les Misérables* was reaching Victor from all parts of the world, both he and his sons became

convinced that a continued residence in her house La Pallue was likely to prove very deleterious to the health of his " Juju," as he called Juliette. Together they insisted that she should vacate her pretty little dwelling which, too much swept by the sea-mists in winter-time, was unhealthy owing to the constant humidity. Greatly she objected to a move, although it was evident that she was suffering, declaring that the very flowers in her garden cried out to her, " Do not leave us ! " Victor, however, would have his way, and Juliette found herself accordingly very soon installed in a new residence, which she christened " Hautèville Féerie."

Here, once more, Victor had arranged everything himself, doing all in his power to decorate the new home in charming Oriental style. Piled up above ancient coffers were porcelain dragons or antique mirrors ; damask hangings covered the walls, gilded peacocks adorned the panels, *bibelots* and *objets d'art* were tumbling over each other in all directions in a studied confusion which was the result of artistic forethought.

The efforts of the master-hand were rewarded with success beyond anticipation. Juliette found her new residence a perfect marvel, and it was in vain that she strove to seek the words to express as she would her admiration and gratitude to him who had devoted to her so many hours with such charming results.

Save for his sons, who, too, were frequently absent, Victor Hugo now was often alone at Hauteville House, for the absences of Madame Hugo from Guernsey were frequent and prolonged. From her residence at Hauteville Féerie, Juliette therefore commenced a discreet supervision of the household affairs at Victor's residence, looking after everything required for running the establishment, managing the servants, and keeping the

accounts. Even when the poet was joined by his sister-in-law, Madame Julie Chenay, without pushing herself forward in any way, Juliette arranged everything to do with Hauteville House from a distance. In this manner, more than any other, was she able to shew her gratitude and definitely ensure the comfort of Victor Hugo's existence.

CHAPTER XXIX

"LES TRAVAILLEURS DE LA MER"

Some writers in the course of their narrative, having to describe a shipwreck or a catastrophe, in which perhaps a town has been destroyed or a huge dam carried away, will prelude the events they have to describe simply and tersely, with the words: "a storm arose," or "a tornado swept over the district." Such was not the method of Victor Hugo.

In *Les Travailleurs de la Mer* he devotes no less than six chapters to the mere approach of the tempest of which, when at length it breaks over the head of the hero who has been awaiting its advent, he gives such a thrilling description. It is wonderful how, in describing the advancing hurricane, he can find such a flow of words, to fall in an unbroken torrent, like the waterspouts which descend from the skies upon the actual arrival of the expected atmospheric disturbance.

Wonderful, indeed, is the power of his pen! As we continue to read on and on, we tremble for what may befall the indomitable fisherman, Gilliatt, alone out at sea upon the two bare rocks known as the Two Dovers, at a distance of some five leagues from the Guernsey coast. Gilliatt knows what is coming to him. Owing to a peculiar phosphorescent effect which had awakened him at night from his slumbers in a hole of the granite rocks upon the summit of the Great Dover, he has been on the alert through at least

twenty-four hours of unbroken and beautiful weather.

During this period of respite he has worked, worked away furiously with courage, intelligence, and wonderful skill, in the hope that he may be able to prevent the destruction in the coming hurricane of that remarkable feat which he has just accomplished.

Alone upon the Two Dovers for weeks past, he has been performing single-handed the work of ten ordinary men. Into his own large fishing craft, which has the build of a Dutch galiot, he has at length succeeded in transferring intact the whole of the machinery, with the high funnel, of the wrecked steamer, *La Durande*. This steamer, the first that had ever been seen in the Channel Islands, had been the property of an inhabitant of Guernsey named Lethierry. It had made him rich, but its loss, caused intentionally by its scoundrelly captain, named Clubin, entailed his ruin. Clubin was missing.

Seeing her uncle's despair, his niece, Déruchette, had declared aloud in a roomfull of fishermen and others that she would marry any man who could be found to salvage the *Durande*, known to be lying wrecked in a narrow channel between the Two Dovers. No one would consent to go near these dangerous rocks; only, without making his purpose known to anyone, Gilliatt had slipped off with his craft in the night. Always a solitary man, none guessed his intention.

Gilliatt could have been safely back in Guernsey with the rescued machinery before the advent of the storm, save for an unfortunate incident.

The *Durande* had been thrown by the waves high up in the narrow channel, with one end resting on the Great Dover, the other on the Little Dover.

Gilliatt had taken his boat right underneath the wreck to lower down the machinery into it. Night

coming on, he could not start off home at once, and in the meantime the rising tide had poked some feet of the long smokestack up from the fishing-boat below through the dilapidated bottom of the wrecked steamer. Until the tide again fell it was impossible to leave, and in the night Gilliatt saw the signs which to his experienced eye betokened the coming storm.

The wonderful deeds by which during the twenty hours that the frightful tempest raged, and by which eventually he saved his boat with its precious load, are described as they can only be described by a Victor Hugo. With every nautical term, the name of every part of the boats and the machinery at his fingers' ends, he writes with all the technical phraseology of a mechanician or a seafaring man, when relating in minute detail the remarkable and successful measures taken by Gilliatt throughout the duration of the tempest to avert the dreaded catastrophe.

When at last the galiot and its burden, which, owing to his love for Déruchette, is so dear to Gilliatt, has been saved, and when, utterly exhausted, he has fallen down in a heavy sleep, we imagine that all the splendid fisherman's troubles have come to an end, that he is freed from danger. Such, however, was by no means the idea of his creator, Victor Hugo. The whole of the events connected with the fearful storm but serve as a prelude to more fearful experiences still which the author is holding in reserve for Gilliatt.

In what follows Victor Hugo succeeds in depicting a situation which is mysterious, tragic, and exciting, the weird contest between a man and a gruesome monster of the sea such as has never been described by any other writer of romance. In the conflict between Gilliatt and the huge octopus or devil-fish he has found a situation which, from a literary sense, must be considered as unique. That the creature Hugo

has described still exists in the seas around the Channel Islands is probable, and that there it occasionally may have been known to attack the fishermen from the islands of Guernsey or Sark is possible. That it will do so in other parts of the world is certain. Some years ago, when we were in Newfoundland, an enormous octopus suddenly attacked a boat in which a man and a boy were fishing. Subsequently we were shown two of the long suckers, each of about some six feet in length, which had been chopped off with an axe by the boy after the devilish creature had flung them over the boat, of which there seemed considerable danger of its being capsized.

What is the difference between that small-sized creature, the squid or cuttlefish, which one has seen on various coasts thrown up in vast numbers, and the octopus, a large and horrible creature and similar in every respect? Probably there is none, and the increased size may be only the result of greater age or better conditions of food.

In the chapter headed "Le Monstre" in *Les Travailleurs de la Mer* we find a splendid and graphic description of *La Pieuvre*—the octopus. It is a description given so vividly that it forms a striking example of that which we have already noted, namely, that Victor Hugo allowed no detail to escape him of anything having to do with the surroundings of the island of Guernsey. The style of writing is incisive and dramatic, and renders this chapter one of the most remarkable in a remarkable book. As an example of Hugo's style, a style which often bites and snaps while revealing the evidence that each phrase has been well thought out, it is well worth reproducing in part.

The chapter starts with the terse assertion: "To believe in the octopus one must have seen it!"

Another assertion follows: "Compared with the octopus, the old hydras make one smile."

Victor Hugo continues, in somewhat cryptic phraseology:

"At certain moments, the indefinite floating in our dreams meets in the possible magnets to which its features become attached, and from these uncertain attractions of a dream are born beings. The Unknown disposes of the prodigy, and disposes of it to compose the monster.

"Orpheus, Homer, and Hesiod have only been able to make the Chimera; God has made the Octopus.

"When God wills, He excels in the execrable.

"The reason of this will is the terror of the religious thinker. All ideals being accepted, if fear be an end, the octopus is a *chef d'œuvre*.

"The whale has immensity, the octopus is small; the hippopotamus has a cuirass, the octopus is naked; the jararaca has a whistle, the octopus is mute; the rhinoceros has a horn, the octopus has no horn; the scorpion has a sting, the octopus has no sting; the buthus has nippers, the octopus has no nippers; the alouate has a holding tail, the octopus has no tail; the shark has cutting fins, the octopus has no fins; the vampire bat has wings with claws, the octopus has no wings; the hedgehog has spines, the octopus has no spines; the swordfish has a sword, the octopus has no sword; the sting-ray has an electric shock, the octopus has none; the toad has virus, the octopus has no virus; the viper has venom, the octopus has no venom; the lion has claws, the octopus has no claws; the griffin has a beak, the octopus has no beak; the crocodile has jaws, the octopus is without teeth.

"The octopus has no muscular mass, no menacing

cry, no cuirass, no horn, no sting, no nippers, no holding or bruising tail, no cutting fins, no spines, no sword, no electric discharge, no virus, no venom, no claws, no beak, no teeth. Of all creatures, the octopus is the most formidably armed!

"What, then, is the octopus? It is a cupping machine. In the rocks of the open sea, there where the exposed water hides all its splendours, in the hollows of unvisited rocks, in unknown caves abounding in vegetation, crustacea and shell-fish, under the profound archways of the ocean, the swimmer who ventures in, attracted by the beauty of the spot, runs the risk of a meeting.

"If you do make this *rencontre*, do not be curious, escape! One goes in dazzled, one comes out terrified.

"Now this is what the *rencontre* consists of, always possible among the rocks in the open sea.

"A greyish form oscillates in the water, it is as thick as the thick part of the arm and about half a yard long, it is a rag. This form resembles a closed umbrella that has no handle. This rag advances towards you by degrees.

"Suddenly it opens out, eight suckers separate brusquely around a face possessing two eyes; these feelers live, there is a blazing in their waving, it is a kind of wheel. It is some five feet in diameter.

"A terrible blossoming out! It hurls itself upon you.

"This beast attaches itself to its prey, covers it, ties it up in its long bands. Underneath it is yellowish, above it is earth colour; nothing could give the inexplicable dust shade; one would say a brute made of ashes that inhabits the water.

"In form it is spider-like, in colour it resembles the chameleon. It becomes violet when irritated.

"A frightful thing! It is soft!

"Its knots strangle you, its contact paralyses.

"The octopus has the aspect of gangrene and scrofula, it is disease arranged in monstrosity.

"You cannot tear it off. It sticks tightly to its prey. How? By emptiness. The eight antennæ, large at the base, gradually narrow down to points like needles.

"Upon each of them are arranged, parallel to one another, two rows of pustules getting smaller, the large ones near the head, the small ones near the point.

"Each row consists of twenty-five pustules, thus there are fifty pustules on each antenna, and in all the beast has four hundred. These pustules are cupping machines.

"These cups are cylindrical cartilages, horned, livid. Upon the large kind they go on diminishing from the size of a five-franc piece to the size of a freckle.

"These portions of tubing come out of the animal and go in again. They can dig down for more than an inch into the flesh of the monster's prey.

"This sucking apparatus has all the delicacy of a keyboard, it obeys the animal's slightest intention. It raises and it conceals itself. The most exquisite sensitiveness cannot equal the contractability of these cups, always proportioned to exterior incidents and the interior movements of the creature. This dragon is a sensitive one.

"This monster is what sailors call a poulp, science calls it a cephalopod, legend *kraken*. English sailors call it devil-fish and also blood-sucker. In the isles of the Channel they name it *la pieuvre*. It is very rare at Guernsey, very small at Jersey, very large and pretty common at Sark.

"A print of Sonnini's edition of Buffon shews a cephalopod enlacing a frigate. Denis Montfort thinks that at any rate the poulp of the higher latitudes is

strong enough to sink a ship. Bory Saint-Vincent denies this, but establishes that in our latitudes it attacks man. Go to Sark and they will show you near Brecq-Hou the crack in the rock where a *pieuvre* a few years ago seized, held, and drowned a lobster-fisher. Péron and Lamarck are mistaken when they think that because it has no fins the octopus cannot swim. He who writes these lines saw with his own eyes at Sark, in the cave called the Boutiques, a *pieuvre* pursue by swimming a man bathing. When killed it was measured and had a surface measurement of four English feet. We were able to count the four hundred sucking pustules. When dying the sickening beast pushed them out of itself convulsively.

"According to Denis Montfort, the poulp has got almost human passions: the poulp hates.

"The swimming octopus remains, so to speak, in its sheath. It swims with all its plaits folded in. Imagine a sewn-up sleeve with a fist inside it. This fist, which is the head, pushes the water aside, and it advances with a vague, undulatory movement. Its two great eyes are not very distinct, being of the colour of water.

"When the *pieuvre* is on the hunt or watching, it hides. It condenses itself and confounds itself with the shadow; it has the vague appearance of anything except anything living.

"The octopus is hypocritical. One pays no attention to it. Suddenly, it opens.

"A stickiness with a will; could there be anything more frightful! Glue frozen by hatred.

"It is from the bluest, most limpid water that this voracious creature comes forth. One does not see the approach of the hideous animal. Nearly always, when you see it you are held.

"Nevertheless at night, and particularly in the

breeding-season, it becomes phosphorescent. This horror has its *amours*. It makes itself beautiful and lights itself up. From the height of some rock one can perceive it below one in the shades, a pale irradiated spectre.

"The octopus can swim; it also can walk. It is partly fish, which does not prevent it from being partly reptile. It crawls along the bottom of the sea, utilising its eight feet to walk with.

"It has no bones, it has no blood, it has no flesh, it is flabby. There is nothing inside it. It is a skin. One can turn its eight tentacles inside out as if they were the fingers of a glove. It has an orifice for the mouth. The whole creature is cold.

"There is no stupefaction to equal the sudden apparition of the *pieuvre*—Medusa served by eight serpents. No seizure to equal the clasp of the cephalopod.

"It is a pneumatic machine that attacks you. You have to do with an emptiness possessing feet. Neither blows of claws nor tearing of teeth. Unspeakable cupping. The claw is nothing to it.

"The claw represents the beast entering into your flesh; with the cupping machine you yourself it is who enter into the beast."

We will now break off from Victor Hugo's description of the gigantic cuttlefish, although, never at a loss for words, similes, comparisons or reflections, he spreads himself out upon the subject of the *pieuvre* for several pages more. What we have given from his chapter, "Le Monstre," is sufficient to shew his wonderful powers of expansion when given an interesting topic.

One reflection of his at the end of the chapter is striking: "Death everywhere entails burial every-

where. The voracious are those who bury. All beings enter one into another. Terrible cleaning up of the globe! Carnivorous man is also a buryer. Our life is made from death. Such is the terrifying law. We are sepulchres!"

CHAPTER XXX

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE OCTOPUS

We must now return to Victor Hugo's remarkable fisherman hero, Gilliatt, who, with the most wonderful courage, had defied the tempest and with the most extraordinary ingenuity, coupled with incessant labour all throughout the storm, had saved his own boat and also the engines of *La Durande*.

When Gilliatt woke up the sea was going down, but not yet calm enough for him to think of setting sail for Guernsey. In the channel-way between the Two Dovers there was, however, now no swell at all, and as Gilliatt was very hungry, he set about hunting for food. It was now a number of weeks since his provisions, with exception of some meal and biscuit, had been blown out of their resting-place in the rocks and devoured by the seagulls. Thus he had been compelled to live upon shell-fish, sea-urchins, sea-anemones, and crabs when he could catch them. Rain-water he had obtained since the storm commenced from holes in the rocks; previously to the advent of the cyclone he had finished the last drop in his store.

Having been feeding for so long upon the shell-fish, he had eaten all those on the rocks in the neighbourhood of his boat. The crabs had a habit of coming out of the sea and climbing up on the rocks to

sun themselves at times, but on the day following the storm there was no sun. What was Gilliatt to do? Even his meal and biscuit were exhausted!

While drying his wet clothing on the rocks, this was a question which he sought to resolve in his mind. He had stripped himself with the exception of his trousers; boots he had none, they were lost, but he preferred to go barefoot on the rocks. Presently he saw a crab where he was hunting on the rocks outside the channel between the Two Dovers. It jumped into the water at his feet, and as it was quite clear and shallow he pursued it. It ran under a kind of porch in the rocks which rose from the water; at the foot of this porch were many pebbles covered with seaweed. Gilliatt jumped in, and by wading, the tide being low, entered a cavern, into which he had already once penetrated but from a different direction.

Disappointed at not finding the crab, he took his knife in his hand with the idea of knocking some limpets off the sides of the rocks. Presently, seeing a fissure a little way ahead in the half-light, to which his eyes were getting by now accustomed, he placed his knife between his teeth as he stumbled on. It was a large knife and very sharp, but he had the habit of carrying it in this manner.

The fissure which Gilliatt observed was above the level of the shallow water in which he was wading in the mysterious cavern, the walls of which were of granite, and it was horizontal. Convinced that the crab that he was hunting must have escaped into it, he plunged in his right arm and began groping about in the shade. It seemed quite a large and deep hole in the granite, and if the crab had gone in there he could not feel it. His arms and body were bare.

Suddenly, he felt his naked arm seized and held! A feeling of indescribable terror took possession of

Gilliatt as he felt something living and sticky wind itself around his arm with a terrible pressure. It was as if his arm were suddenly bound round and round by a strap, which at the same time seemed full of gimlets which bored into the flesh, causing an agonising, burning sensation.

In a second this thong prolonged itself ; it wound itself round the arm from the wrist to the elbow, and thence upwards until the point reached under the armpit. It was a thing of life, moving with intelligence.

A violent effort to throw himself backwards on the part of Gilliatt proved futile. He could not move.

Taking his knife rapidly from his mouth with his left hand, he also with this hand thrust himself violently back from the wall of the rock.

For sole result the ligature round his arm tightened ; it felt now like some cold band of solid steel.

As he exerted himself vainly, a second thong flew like an arrow from the crevice in the rock. Like the long tongue from the horrid mouth of some noxious animal, it licked his naked body, it stretched itself out and wound itself around the bare flesh. Gilliatt commenced to feel inconceivable agony, with the pressure of what felt like numberless burning buttons forcing their way into his flesh. He seemed to feel numerous lips glued to his naked body. The kisses of these lips drank blood.

A third thong flew out like a whiplash and coiled itself round the unfortunate man's body, lower down. It was evident that the devilish owner of these thongs was acting with discrimination—it knew well what it was about. From the dark hole within which it lay concealed it was selecting the parts of its victim at which to strike in succession ; a fourth tentacle which now sprang out coiled itself around the stomach below

the waist. All of these living bands adhered at many points. The agony that they caused was terrible, but the agony of the man's mind as he realised his helplessness beneath these leathery bands was more intense still.

Up till now he had full freedom of breathing; his neck was free. The devilish creature within the hole no doubt observed this. Out flashed a fifth thong like lightning, and coiled itself round the base of his throat. Gilliatt now felt himself half suffocated.

But he could not move.

Presently he saw his enemy. A large flabby mass shewed itself at the mouth of the hole. In front of this was a head with large staring eyes. Gilliatt now recognised his deadly foe. A huge octopus and he were gazing into each other's faces, the distance that separated them was small. He could see from the terrible creature's body three more tentacles stretching out backwards to grasp the rock behind. He felt himself being drawn in closer to that dreadful Medusa-like head. He could not resist. The only effort he could make was to try to keep out of its reach his left arm holding his knife. He held it behind him.

The animal was watching this arm. Like a water-demon, the most fiendish malevolence gleamed from its glassy eyes. The monstrous inhabitant of this grotto of the sea was calculating. Two tentacles were sufficient for it to hold on by to the rock behind it. It could, therefore, spare one to seize the only visible portion of its prey still left at liberty above the water on the floor of the cavern. Gilliatt was up to his waist in water.

Five of the horrible gluey, elastic bands enlaced him; they were furnished with two hundred and fifty sucking pustules, every one of which was embedded in his flesh.

What were his thoughts ? Was he thinking of Déruchette, the beautiful girl to whom he never ventured to address a word, although by coquettishly writing his name in the snow some five years earlier she herself had attracted his attention ? For once, Gilliatt was not thinking of Déruchette, sole cause though she was of his being now face to face with one of the most horrible deaths that the mind can conceive.

Except where a woman was concerned, there was not a braver man in the world than Gilliatt. While the octopus was calculating on the one side, he, too, was watching his enemy and calculating whether or no he yet had left a sporting chance of life. He knew the deadly *pieuvre* well enough ; knew also how to kill the loathsome creature if he had but the chance. Trying to cut off its tentacles was no good ; they were like rubber and would give under the knife, or if he did succeed in cutting one through, his knife would cut into his own flesh below. The only way, as Gilliatt knew well, in which to kill the *pieuvre* was one that the fishermen of Sark had learned from the porpoises. To cut off the brute's head when for a second it elongated it from its flabby, sack-like body was this method. In some way the porpoises had learned how to bite off the heads of these creatures, with the result that their headless bodies had often been seen by Gilliatt and the other fishermen of the Channel Islands floating round the coasts.

While he still had his left arm free, Gilliatt had a chance of reaching the only vulnerable point of his fearsome antagonist's anatomy. But could he keep it free ? He was one of those men who are ambi-dextrous, he could use his left hand as well as his right—the chance to do so was what he wanted, that was all.

Meanwhile he felt his muscles cracking under the

pressure being put upon them. The octopus remained still, steadily watching the man. By thus remaining still the cunning monster thought to put him off his guard.

At length, like the lightning flash, out flew a sixth tentacle towards Gilliatt's left arm; but he avoided it, for he, too, was on the alert. At the same moment the ghastly, ghoul-like creature extended its head with the intention of seizing Gilliatt's bare body. As the horrid mouth touched his chest Gilliatt's knife flew through the air with a circular cutting motion. The blade, attaining the octopus behind its extended head, was drawn downwards and sideways. Its keen edge severed the grisly head from the body and it fell into the water. The tentacles relaxed also and fell. Gilliatt was free!

Victor Hugo does not allow his hero to escape from the mysterious cavern of the sea without a further surprise being in store for him.

After the conclusion in his favour of the heroic contest between himself and the monster, Gilliatt becomes aware of the fact that he is not the only man of whom the deadly octopus had sought to make a meal. Wandering further on into the recesses of the cave, he suddenly discovered a skeleton of a man. It was almost covered by the empty shells of the crabs by which the man's bones had been picked bare before they themselves had been sucked dry by the *pieuvre*. The man's skull grinned at him in a ghastly manner under the shallow water.

Round the backbone of the dead man was a leather belt, to which was fastened a watertight metal box. Upon the inside of the belt a name was distinctly visible. Before noticing this name, Gilliatt opened the box, which was a sailor's tobacco box made to

open with a spring. As he had opened the belt in the fold of which this box had been held, Gilliatt had discovered twenty pounds in English gold, but when he opened the box he was surprised indeed. It contained three English bank-notes each of the value of £1,000.

Examining the belt, Gilliatt now read the name, "Sieur Clubin." It was the name of the scoundrelly captain of the *Durande* who had purposely wrecked that craft during a fog. The £3,000 belonged to Lethierry, Déruchette's uncle, and Clubin was making off with it when he ran the steamboat upon the rocks. Having sent the crew and passengers off in the only boat, the hypocritical Clubin had procured for himself the reputation of being an honest man and noble captain by refusing himself to leave the wreck.

The reason that he gave for remaining alone on board the stranded *Durande* was that the boat was already full enough, one more would render it unsafe. No sooner was the boat out of sight than Clubin had plunged into the water to swim to the high rocks, with the intention of flying a signal to arrest any passing vessel.

He never reached those rocks. Clubin was still under the water after his plunge when he had felt himself seized by the leg !

The rest we can imagine.

After more adventures of a hairbreadth description, when at last the noble Gilliatt has reached the shore, and has restóred both the engines and the £3,000 in bank-notes to their owner, would it not be supposed that the author of *Les Travailleurs de la Mer* would reward him with the hand of the girl whom he loves ?

But not at all ! The author has other views. Therefore, in order to make the noble Gilliatt appear more noble still, Victor Hugo marries Déruchette off

to a young English parson. When this niminy-piminy young man proves wanting in courage to take the girl himself, and preaches to her resignation, because her uncle does not approve of parsons and prefers sailors, Gilliatt intervenes.

He arranges everything, complies in advance with all the necessary formalities and, just when the young clergyman is saying farewell to Déruchette and about to embark for England, he arrives on the scene and almost forcibly carries the couple off to be married.

The Dean of Guernsey is found waiting in the church and the ceremony commences, Gilliatt being the one to give the bride away.

When the Dean asks the Rev. Ebenezer Caudray, the bridegroom, for the wedding-ring, that young man stares open-mouthed. He had thought to embark upon the ship *Cashmere* and to leave the lovely Déruchette to watch his departure with tears in her eyes, but a wedding-ring for her, that was another matter!

The trouble does not last long. Gilliatt produces a golden ring which he has purchased that morning and the marriage is completed.

The unfortunate Gilliatt goes through with his agony to the end; he drinks his cup of misery to the lees. He sends Déruchette off at once with her parson to the *Cashmere,* telling her as he puts her into the boat that as she has got no clothes he has already sent on board a case containing her trousseau. This was the trousseau which his mother had left him for his bride at the time of her death.

He had always intended it for Déruchette.

All these things being accomplished, Victor Hugo still piles up the agony upon the unhappy Gilliatt. He takes him to the fatal chair of granite on the top of a rock from which once upon a time he had rescued

the Rev. Ebenezer Caudray from the waves. Here the author leaves Gilliatt to sit while the tide is rising, to watch the passing of the *Cashmere*.

The ship passes so close to the rock that the broken-hearted hero not only sees the loving couple seated close to one another on the deck, but he hears the actual words that fall from Déruchette's lips.

Motionless he sits watching the ship, and the tide creeps up and up. He could swim ashore if he should so choose. He does not choose.

At length, just as the *Cashmere* disappears into the mists of the distance, the rippling waters close gently over Gilliatt's head.

It is in this painful manner that ends the *Travailleurs de la Mer*, and it is not one in which to cause the reader to admire Victor Hugo's management of a love affair. Throughout the book the relations of Déruchette with both of her lovers are more than unconvincing. With the parson they are ridiculous, unnatural.

Splendid as he is in his narrative, his adventure, when it comes to the relations of the sexes Victor Hugo fails. We find this with Fantine in *Les Misérables*, with La Esmeralda in *Notre Dame de Paris*, and finally with Déruchette in *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE EXILE ENDED

In Guernsey the years passed peacefully on, and for Victor Hugo and Juliette Drouet alike they were years of both work and pleasure. For the former was all the glory, for the latter the happiness that comes from seeking the happiness of others. With Juliette it was a very real one, while to such an extent was her influence felt within the walls of Hauteville House that Madame Hugo became more than ever anxious to make a personal friend of the friend of her husband.

On the ground, however, that the English susceptibilities of the austere islanders might be offended, with a discreet reserve Juliette only once, in the year 1858, consented even to go and inspect Victor's art treasures. At this time, moreover, he was alone in Hauteville House.

There was no idea of rivalry on the part of Madame Hugo. On the contrary, she shewed every inclination to treat as a neighbour and friend the proprietress of Hauteville Féerie. Owing to her constantly feeling tired and an inclination to sleep at any moment of the day, she was herself incapable of running an establishment; always she was absolutely devoid of energy. Thus she was gained more and more by the little attentions of Juliette, which saved her trouble, and became anxious to be on personal terms of friendship with one of whom her sons always spoke with affection.

Juliette, for her part, was long past the day when she could feel any jealousy of the fact that Adèle it was who was the legitimate wife, while she had no proper standing of her own, only her love for Victor. Photographs taken of Victor together with Adèle adorned her mantelshelf, and, far from being jealous, she wrote praising up Madame Hugo's looks and her good qualities, while telling Victor that she only wishes that, for the honour of his name and his happiness, Madame Victor Hugo " might be even more handsome and more saintly " than ever.

Nevertheless, when asked by Adèle in a charming letter to come and pass Christmas Day of 1864 at Hauteville House, Juliette replied in most complimentary terms, but pleading her solitary habits as a reason for continuing to remain outside in the background.

Christmas Day was usually a great day for the children of the poor at Hauteville House, as upon that day Victor Hugo was in the habit of entertaining some forty or fifty of them at his home. He was always kind and generous to children ; strange to relate, since we commenced writing these lines, one of those children has told us how well she remembered his kindness and his patting her upon the head at Guernsey.

It was not only on the occasion of Christmas that the poor were entertained at Hauteville House. In a letter which he wrote to Octave Lacroix, the Brussels publisher, on June 30th, 1862, Victor Hugo says:

" Every Tuesday I give a dinner to fifteen small children, chosen from among the poorest in the island, and my family and I wait upon them. By this means I endeavour to make this feudal people understand the meaning of equality and fraternity."

Upon the occasions of the Christmas entertainments the hearts of the young visitors were made happy by the present of clothing and toys. But there were in addition almost daily gifts of bread and meat made to the poor at the gate of Hauteville House.

These Guernsey children interested Juliette greatly; she would not go to see them fed, but she loved to see them coming away happy and contented after their feasts. Upon one occasion—it was in February, 1865—she wrote that she had watched all the children on their way home, when the smallest ones who could not eat any more were licking the outside of the cakes that they carried in their hands. She says:

"It is a sight of which I could not get tired. I have more than once envied the happiness of serving these poor little ragged beings. I call down the blessings of God upon you and upon them."

Directly after writing this, once again Juliette declined an invitation to dine at Hauteville House; but at last Madame Hugo got the better of her opposition.

It was a case of "Mahomed going to the mountain" when, on January 22nd, 1867, this lady, after giving due notice through Victor of her intention, called formally upon Juliette at Hauteville Féerie.

The ice was at length broken, and after duly returning the visit, Juliette became a regular visitor at Hauteville House, where she was soon as one of the family. She became the intimate friend both of Madame Hugo and her sister, Madame Chenay, with which latter lady she used to pass her time in copying out manuscripts. When her faithful Suzanne took a holiday, Juliette even passed a month with the Hugo family.

Thus Victor Hugo lived a strange patriarchal existence between the two ladies, who now resembled two wives occasionally living happily under the same roof together.

Soon, however, he was to be left with Juliette alone, for Madame Hugo died at Brussels on August 27th, 1868, after having only been taken ill on the 25th of the month. The lady whom Victor had worshipped as his beloved Adèle when he had married her so many years previously, was buried in France. He, however, being still proscribed, was unable to follow her body further than to the Belgian frontier.

The family were staying in Brussels with Charles Hugo, who had married and was living at 4, Place des Barricades, at the time of her death. Juliette, who was also in Brussels, experienced a real grief at her loss. Save for the fear of the remarks of evil tongues, she would have followed the remains of Madame Hugo to her last resting-place in France. A cameo brooch which the deceased lady had left her as a token of affection, Juliette valued highly, and wore constantly throughout her own declining years.

The wife whom Charles Hugo had selected was a charming young lady who had presented him with three children, two of whom were later to become the heroes of Victor Hugo's work, *L'Art d'être Grand-père*.

He did not remain long in Brussels with his son's family, however, after his wife's decease, but returned to Guernsey with Juliette. After their return to the island the elderly lovers resumed their former custom of living apart, but now they formed the habit of taking their meals together, sometimes at Hauteville House, at others at Hauteville Féerie.

Of the two, it would seem as if Juliette were the one most affected by this sudden death of Adèle Hugo.

Although the couple had resumed their old custom

JULIETTE DROUET IN OLD AGE.
From the painting by Bastien Lepage.

[*Facing p.* 256.

of daily walks along the seashore, Juliette, who was wanting in the sturdy vigour of Victor, was inclined for contemplation. She would willingly sit by the fire with a religious book in her hand and think regretfully of the hour to come which would entail separation from him whom she had only learned to love more with the advance of years. Of one thing she was convinced, which was that should her friend be the first to go, she could not survive him.

Victor Hugo, who still felt life surging strong within him, did not like to dwell upon these melancholy anticipations. Full of projects for the future, his mind was taken up with the approaching reproduction in Paris of *Lucrèce Borgia*, the play in which Juliette had fulfilled the rôle of the Princesse Negroni. Although he might not be present in person to see it, he anticipated a triumph at the Théatre Porte Saint-Martin, which would be in a measure a revenge of the exiled author upon the Emperor who had exiled him.

While awaiting the time when this piece could be put on the boards once more, Victor Hugo put a measure to his companion's sad thoughts, by taking her off with him to revisit haunts along the banks of the Rhine where they had already wandered together in days gone by. As in the summer days they looked once more with pleasure upon the green vineyards, upon the slopes above the beautiful river, little did Victor Hugo know that his longed-for revenge upon Napoleon III. was so soon to come from the lovely German country now under his contemplation.

Before the commencement of the as yet unforeseen quarrel between France and Germany which was to cast his enemy, "M. Bonaparte," from his seat, *Lucrèce Borgia* duly made its appearance. When the first representation took place upon February 2nd, 1870,

the house resounded with acclamations. Never did piece have a better reception.

In the Paris to which he was not allowed to go, the glory of Victor Hugo had now reached its zenith. His joy was indeed great, even though in Guernsey, instead of the resounding plaudits of the crowd, he heard but the heartfelt congratulations of the Princess Negroni of February 2nd, 1833.

How little Victor Hugo anticipated the advent of the terrible war which was so close at hand, is evident from the circumstance that merely a few days before the Prussians were over the French border he was making the people of Guernsey smile with his Utopian ideas. On July 14th, 1870, the poet planted an oak, which he dedicated, with much verse, to the United States of Europe.

Those of us who are old enough to remember the Franco-Prussian war, will recollect that almost from its inception its events proved unfavourable to France. An exception was the fight at Saarbruck at the commencement of the conflict. At this Napoleon III. was present, and having taken to the war with him his young son, he theatrically telegraphed to the Empress Eugénie the famous message which inspired all France, in which he stated that the Prince Imperial had bravely undergone "his baptism of fire."

A few days later—we think it was after the battle of Woerth—it was the opponent of Louis Napoleon who electrified Europe by his flamboyant telegraphic despatch to his queen. This, as humorously rendered into English, ran:

> "My dear Augusta,
> I've gone another buster.
> Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below!
> Thank God, from whom all blessings flow!"

As soon as these tidings so disastrous for France

commenced to be flashed over the wires to all parts of the world, Victor Hugo left Guernsey. Scarcely had he arrived in Belgium at the end of August, 1870, before there took place the terrible disaster of Sedan. The Emperor Napoleon III. surrendered himself and his army to the Prussians at the beginning of September, and immediately a Republic was once more proclaimed in France.

Upon September 5th, 1870, after an exile of nineteen years, Victor Hugo took a ticket for Paris in Brussels and re-entered France.

CHAPTER XXXII

"L'HOMME QUI RIT"

In perhaps none of his books did Victor Hugo display more of his peculiar talent than in a singular romance, the greater part of which was written in the island of Guernsey. This much-debated work, published under the name of *L'Homme qui Rit*, was commenced, so we learn from a note of the author's, at Brussels on July 21st, 1866, and after being continued throughout two years in Guernsey, was terminated in Brussels at 10.30 A.M. on August 23rd, 1868.

In this romance Victor Hugo reveals all his power, shews his remarkable skill for analysing to their depths the most poignantly thrilling sensations of which humanity is capable. Nor does he neglect to study the ocean and its moods for, as in the *Travailleurs de la Mer*, he dwells for many pages upon a storm at sea, although the situation is here made the more terrible, since throughout the storm he follows the actions, words, and sensations of those on board a ship exposed for long to its full fury, only to be lost at last with every living soul on board.

Victor Hugo's knowledge of sea-terms and parts of a ship is most remarkable. It is not, however, one that can be shared by many of his readers who have not his knowledge of nautical matters. Hence it is not surprising if at the time of the publication of *L'Homme qui Rit* many of his critics found fault with him for the use of terms that they did not understand.

The same thing had happened upon the occasion of the publication of *Notre Dame de Paris*, when Victor Hugo was violently attacked for the use of archaic terms that were declared to be unintelligible, thereby exciting the author's scorn and derision.

The publication of *L'Homme qui Rit* caused a considerable sensation. The book was read universally, but it was not received without a certain amount of hostility by the literary world, many writers proclaiming themselves as being quite unable to understand this most pathetic work. This we can readily believe, since more, perhaps, than in any of his forceful narratives, Hugo deserts his main narrative for endless digressions upon such subjects as the relationships and descents of British peers, or the methods employed in the reign of Queen Anne of introducing a new peer into the House of Lords.

The author would appear to have had the genealogy of the British aristocracy at his fingers' ends, but it was surely trying his French readers a bit high when in his opening chapters he described a travelling house or hovel on wheels drawn by a man and a wolf, the walls of which were adorned with the rules of precedence as applied to long lists of peers whose names, for no apparent reason whatever, were painted up on the mountebank's car.

Some critics who were evilly disposed to Hugo called down the public indignation upon *L'Homme qui Rit*. It is, indeed, a work in which the horrible mingles with the gentle and graceful, and which develops in a manner beloved by the author moral beauty in physical deformity and ugliness of soul in beauty of body.

Examples of this are to be seen respectively in Gwynplaine, the mountebank, and the Duchess Josiane, who are characters in fiction never likely to

be forgotten. The sweet nature of the gentle, loving Dea is also portrayed with a masterly touch bound to excite the sympathy of the reader.

The book opens with a description of a kind of learned, philosophical charlatan who, at the beginning of the reign in England of William III. and Mary, perambulates the country with a kind of little hovel on wheels drawn by a wolf. The man helps to drag the car himself and sleeps in it while the wolf lives beneath it and is the faithful companion of the man. He satirically calls himself Ursus, while to his wolf he has given the name of Homo, saying that the animal merits the name better than most men.

Under a rough exterior, and in spite of an angry way of speaking which is assumed perhaps unconsciously, Ursus possesses a kind heart. He is a successful wanderer on the whole, being popular wherever he goes. As a ventriloquist he excels, as a doctor he dispenses medicines, while, when dressed in a bear-skin, he indulges in a rough-and-tumble fight with the trained wolf Homo ; his mock combat of wild beasts is always a great success and brings in a little money. Thus Ursus contrives to earn just enough wherewith to keep body and soul together.

The attitude that he takes up, at any rate in his lengthy conversations with his wolf, is that of a hater of the human race. Human life, Ursus considers a frightful thing, of which he recognises the acknowledged scourges, one superimposed upon another. The kings are on the people, war is on the kings, the plague is on war, famine is on the plague, and stupidity upon everything. In the mere fact of living Ursus recognises a certain amount of punishment. Having recognised also in death a deliverance, when a sick man is brought to him he cures him with the sarcasm, " Long may you walk in the valley of tears ! " When

he sees a poor man starving Ursus gives him all he can, while swearing at him: "Get along, wretch! Eat! Last a long time! I am not the one to shorten your misery for you." And when the poor wretch has gone happy away, Ursus rubs his hands together, saying to himself, "I do to men all the harm that I can." Such, then, was that original who had painted up on the wall on the interior of his little caravan the words, "Ursus, Philosopher."

At about the same period at which we meet with Ursus and his wolf, namely, one evening in January, 1690, we see at the foot of the high cliff of Portland Bill a band of very suspicious and foreign-looking men, accompanied by one or two women and a boy, hastily loading up a small Spanish craft moored in a creek alongside the rock.

They were evidently about to embark in a feverish hurry in order to get out of the country, and that notwithstanding the fact that the sky looked stormy, there was a bitter and rising wind and a few flakes of snow were falling.

Everything had been put on board, the last package flung on to the deck. The women crossed the gang-plank and the boy, who was about ten years of age, was following, when he was pushed roughly on one side, nearly falling into the water. The last man rushed on board, kicked the gang-plank violently on one side so that it fell, then with an axe cut the rope which formed the mooring of the craft. This instantly drifted away from the shore, a sail was hoisted, and its distance increased. Nobody said a word to the little boy, who was abandoned on the shore. Nor did the little boy make a sign or utter a cry. He stood stolidly watching the departing ship with its living freight. They consisted of all the people whom he had ever known in the world, but he loved none of

these foreign people of mixed nationalities who had so cruelly abandoned him in a barren spot on a winter's night. He watched the ship go gradually out of the creek and then gain the sea, after which the boy turned to the cliff and commenced to climb up it.

What were these people? They were a gang of the wretches called by the Spanish name of *comprachicos,* or child-buyers, who, throughout the reigns of the Stuart kings, had been not only tolerated but encouraged in England. They bought small children and deformed them by various strange arts, and then sold them as dwarfs or misshapen buffoons as playthings into the houses of great nobles and princes throughout the land. With the flight of James II. and the advent of William III. a change had come. Now the *comprachicos* were being put down everywhere with a strong hand, with the result that they were flying to other countries while getting rid of any children who might compromise them.

Actively, but painfully, the little boy climbed the steep cliff, of which the ascent seemed interminable, and of which the stones often slipped away from under his bare feet. Occasionally he looked out to sea, where he saw a light placed on the bow of the creeping craft, which was evidently commencing to feel the force of the rising wind. As the light failed on shore he looked no longer but struggled on, upward, ever upward.

The horrors that the poor little boy went through and the dangers that he escaped crossing the narrow isthmus leading to the mainland in the dark, are related as only a Hugo can relate them. The child's will was, however, indomitable, and not even the fact that he came upon a gallows upon which the body of a man was gibbeted appalled him, for he did not know at first what it was. When, however, a violent gust

of the rising storm caused the body to swing violently about with creaking chains and disturbed a quantity of carrion crows that were perched upon it and that flew away croaking loudly, the little boy was frightened and started to run. This saved him, for, without knowing it, he had been almost frozen and had nearly fallen asleep while standing still and gazing through the gloom at the sinister gallows.

Most of the night, through the increasing snowstorm, the little waif struggled on, not knowing where he was going. At length he heard a weird, wailing sound, and looking about, found the body of a recently dead woman under the snow, upon whose breast was a living baby. The little boy took the baby, wrapped it in his own peajacket, and carrying it in his arms, struggled on through the night, himself now nearly naked.

At length, as the clock struck three, quite exhausted, he stumbled into a town, which was Weymouth; but none would open to him although he knocked loudly with a stone at many doors. Not even a window was opened; all within made as if they heard nothing. Almost falling with fatigue, hunger, and despair, but not abandoning the baby, the ten-year-old child crossed a covered bridge, where for the first time since he had left the shore he found temporary shelter. Beyond the bridge were more houses, for he had arrived in what was then the town of Melcomb-Regis, now absorbed in Weymouth.

Here, again, no one would open to the boy. There had recently been an epidemic of plague in London, therefore, apart from being unwilling to incur the discomfort of leaving their warm beds on a winter's night, the inhabitants of these two towns were not going to take any risks by admitting stray wanderers who might have come from the infected city.

In the terrible cold, and in these pitiless surroundings, the boy's courage and strength had just given out when, in a bare place that he had reached beyond the houses, he heard a menacing growl and grinding of teeth, also a rattling of a chain. He advanced towards the noise and saw a little waggon which also formed a cabin. It had a roof and a smoking chimney-pipe, while a faint red light such as a firelight shewed through a small window at the back. The growling and chain-rattling continued below this waggon, and an animal's head and white teeth appeared between the wheels.

As the boy stood gazing, a head appeared at the little window, while a voice cried out : " Be quiet ! " The head was that of the philosophic mountebank, Ursus, while the savage growling was that of his wolf Homo.

The ensuing scene, in which, while pretending to be furious with the little boy, Ursus kindly welcomes him and feeds the famishing child with his own food —all that he had and had been preparing for himself —is graphic in the extreme.

Then presently, as Ursus discovers the fact that the packet he had ordered the child to put down on entering, contains a little girl baby, his apparent anger increases. But so does his kindness, and the tender way in which he manufactures a feeding-bottle and gives the infant warm milk, is touching in the extreme. But his abusive language is most amusing to contrast with the humanity of his actions.

At length he clothes the two children with something dry, and puts them to bed together side by side under a bear-skin on a chest ; after which he sallies forth with his wolf into the still furious storm to see if the little boy's story about having found a dead woman is correct. No doubt he would rescue her also if she were not dead ; but when at length the wolf smells

her out in the snow the poor creature is frozen stiff.

"Decidedly happy! Quite dead!" exclaims the philosopher.

Just as day commences to break Ursus returned to the caravan, and the wolf, entering with him, awakened the little boy, at whose face Ursus stared as he now saw it for the first time. For in the night he had had no light but the glow from his stove.

Ursus spoke brusquely to the child: "What have you got to laugh at?"

"I do not laugh," the boy answered.

The philosopher examined him closely. "Then you are terrible," he said.

"Do not laugh any longer," he continued presently. "I tell you that you do laugh."

"I do not laugh," the boy repeated.

Shaking the little boy with either anger or pity, Ursus asked: "Who did that to you? How long is it since you had that laugh?"

"I have always been like that," the poor little fellow replied.

Taking up a big Latin book by one Dr. Conquest, Ursus read an article on the mutilation of children, in which was given an explanation of the manner of distorting a human face so as to cause it to laugh perpetually.

Grumblingly, Ursus replaced the book, and at that moment the little girl awoke with a cry.

"Now then, wet nurse, feed the baby!" exclaimed the philosopher, as he got down the milk-bottle he had arranged in the night.

As he took the infant girl upon his lap the beams of the rising sun fell straight upon the pupils of her eyes, which never winked or blinked as the light struck them. Ursus gazed at the baby.

"She is blind!" he exclaimed aloud.

CHAPTER XXXIII

GWYNPLAINE AND HIS LAUGH

THE boy's name was Gwynplaine; at least, he informed Ursus that the *comprachicos* had never called him by any other than this foreign-sounding cognomen, so Ursus adopted it.

To the little blind girl Ursus gave the name of Dea, and he kept both of the children with him as though they were his own. They lived in his little caravan and travelled with him everywhere. The boy was a good acrobat, with supple joints, having been instructed in athletic feats from infancy. As Gwynplaine grew older his perpetually joyous face, which was so comic that to look at it induced laughter in all, became a great aid in the receipts of cash made daily by Ursus after his performances.

It was evident to Ursus that the boy had not been born with a face of which the mouth stretched from ear to ear, while various other malformations but served to heighten the appearance of perpetual laughter, but that consummate art had been employed to produce the required effect in early infancy. However that might be, as the boy grew up as a mountebank his face was his fortune. Unable to look sad himself, the melancholy had but to look at him to be cured. People in mourning, viewing Gwynplaine's face, laughed indecently; a funeral procession passing him became cheerful. A hangman came to look at

him one day, and laughed until he rolled upon the ground in his uncontrollable mirth.

Gwynplaine's automatic laugh was fixed for ever. Owing to the mysterious operation effected on him in childhood, all the parts of his face contributed to this laugh, all his emotions, whatever they might be, but served to increase, indeed, to aggravate, his extraordinary expression of joy. If he were grieved or angry he but laughed the more. Thus his face excited the hilarity of the crowd ; people were first fascinated and then sometimes, especially the women, were horrified at it ; for it was nothing but a mask, a mask of a laughing Medusa.

Whatever might be the thoughts of Gwynplaine, he was compelled to laugh. And yet that the lad was capable of deep thought was evident from the contour of his head, which was as well shaped as his admirable body was well formed and symmetrical.

As Gwynplaine grew up he and Dea grew to love each other with an ever-increasing love, which was spiritual, not carnal. Dea, who, blind as she was, depended on him for everything, knew how he had rescued her in the snow, for Ursus had told her the story. She could not see his face, but declared that he was handsome, while he replied that he adored Dea. Ursus listened, uttered various sarcasms and laughed at the couple, but in his heart he approved of his children loving each other.

When Gwynplaine was twenty-five years old, with a caravan greatly increased in size and drawn by two horses, the party went to London. Here, while installed in the courtyard of the Tadcaster Inn, in Southwark, they all performed nightly in a kind of little play that Ursus had composed, called *Chaos Conquered*. In this Dea and Gwynplaine sang duets, Ursus ventriloquised, while the whole performance

closed by a fight between Ursus, Gwynplaine, and the wolf Homo, who, although now grown old, was still as strong and lively as ever.

Here in Southwark money simply poured in, while throughout all London Gwynplaine was now celebrated as *L'Homme qui Rit*—the Man who Laughs.

One night in the little box in the audience reserved for the nobility, a magnificent grand lady, attended by a gorgeously-dressed page, sat alone to view the performance. Her appearance was sensuous, she was beautiful, very décolletée and covered with jewels.

The whole audience, like the actors, were greatly excited at her appearance, and at the end of the performance she left several ounces of gold behind her before departing in a splendid coach attended by footmen in a semi-royal livery. This lady was the Duchess Josiane, an illegitimate daughter of James II. and half-sister of Queen Anne, who was by this time reigning in England.

The appearance of this lovely being had greatly moved Gwynplaine, but much more was he moved when, late on a subsequent night, when he was alone, her page-boy thrust into his hand a letter. The contents of this ran as follows:

"You are horrible and I am beautiful. You are an actor and I a duchess. I am the first and you are the last. I want you. I love you. Come!"

Before leaving him, the page informed Gwynplaine that he would meet him on the following night at London Bridge and take him to the place "where he was awaited"—he did not say where that was.

The effect upon the unhappy young man, who was accustomed to see women look upon him with horror, of a communication of this kind from the most resplendent being whom he had ever beheld, was simply

disastrous. His pulses beat fast, his brain was topsy-turvy, he forgot Dea, forgot everything.

For him, Gwynplaine, to be told by the greatest beauty at the Court that he was more than loved, that he was desired, chosen by her for her lover, was something too wonderful, unimaginable. And all his senses were set on edge by the recollection of the beauty and *abandon* of this great lady, who now in the most shameless manner made him the offer of all her charms.

He passed a sleepless night, throughout the whole of which he argued with himself as to whether he would go to London Bridge on the morrow's night or no. And while the cry of the flesh answered, "Yes, go!" the cry of the soul, equally insistent, replied, "No, refrain! Fly from the temptress!"

He had never slept a wink when he heard the sweet voice of his beloved Dea. She had come to call him and tell him that breakfast was ready. Gwynplaine, suppressing a sigh, strove to reply in cheerful, careless tones and arose to follow her.

Some explanation is here necessary concerning the Duchess Josiane and her position.

To this daughter of his by a great lady, James II., while in her childhood giving her the title of Duchess, had also allotted the worldly goods and possessions of a great noble who had died in Switzerland. He was Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquess of Corlione in Sicily, a peer of England and possessor of great estates in both England and Scotland. Lord Clancharlie had, however, been a rebel and follower of Oliver Cromwell, who, at the time of the restoration of the Stuarts in the person of Charles II., had refused to make his submission to the Crown, but had stubbornly continued to live abroad, where for many years he was unmarried.

This nobleman, however, had left an illegitimate son in England, and as the mother of this boy had become the mistress of Charles II., the lad was brought up at the Court, and eventually became a favourite of James II., who allowed him to call himself by the courtesy title of Lord David Dirry Moir. This youth was much older than the Duchess Josiane, but James II. had only given to his natural daughter the estates of Clancharlie under the understanding that when she was old enough she should marry David Dirry Moir, who would then, in default of any legitimate heirs male of the late Lord Clancharlie, assume his various titles.

Nevertheless, there was a rumour current that in his advanced age Lord Clancharlie had not only married in Switzerland but left a legitimate heir. This fact King James II. chose to ignore, or, rather, to deny.

As Josiane grew up, while displaying voluptuous instincts, she shewed no wish to marry. David Dirry Moir and she remained, however, on the most intimate terms. He was enjoying life in his own way, which was that of a somewhat rowdy, good-natured aristocrat. He, therefore, was perfectly content to allow the peculiar situation of intimacy with the young duchess to continue to exist without being in a hurry to obtain the title of Clancharlie by marrying her. Being in the habit of visiting all the centres of boxing, bear-baiting, and cock-fighting in London, Lord David had long since become a constant visitor to the caravan of Ursus and Gwynplaine ; and, indeed, he it had been who had advised Josiane, who was bored with life, to seek recreation and mirth by going to see the man merely to look at whom made everybody laugh.

The Duchess Josiane had not, however, laughed on seeing Gwynplaine. She had gazed at him steadfastly, and the more she gazed the more her perverted

instincts had caused her to be abnormally attracted to him.

On the morning of the day that she had instructed her page to bring the man with the face of mirth to her London house at night, Josiane was greatly upset by an incident which disturbed her plans. She received an order from Queen Anne, who was at Windsor Castle, to instantly repair also to Windsor, and to go there to her palace, one which had belonged to Lord Clancharlie, called Corlione Place. The Queen's message said that she required her half-sister's presence that very afternoon; to disobey the order was, therefore, impossible. The young duchess drove off, therefore, to Windsor, but no sooner was she installed at Corlione Place than the Queen sent her word that she would not see her until the morrow.

Meanwhile, in the caravan in the Tadcaster Inn yard in Southwark, there occurred on the same morning a very grave incident to disturb the breakfast-table of Ursus, Gwynplaine, and Dea. Scarcely had Gwynplaine tenderly handed her tea to the gentle and beautiful blind girl, and before he had drunk a cup himself, when he and Ursus saw a most alarming figure standing silently behind Dea in the open doorway. This figure held in his hand a stick, at the end of which was an iron crown. He was a high police official of the day named the Wapentake, and whoever he should touch with the iron weapon in his hand was bound by the most stringent law to instantly follow him in silence without comment or question. He was accompanied by other officers, who had not entered.

Leaning over Dea's head, the Wapentake touched Gwynplaine with his terrible staff. Aghast, Ursus and Gwynplaine gazed in each other's eyes. They knew the Wapentake and they knew the law; resistance was useless!

In an agony lest Dea should know what was happening, Gwynplaine rose, making pretence that he must see to something outside. He took his hat and his coat and walked outside. The Wapentake preceded him; the other officials filed up on each side of him; they passed out of the courtyard of the inn.

Gwynplaine was gone! Before he left, Ursus had just the time to whisper, "Make no remark unless questioned."

Ursus, too, left the caravan, and in an agony of apprehension followed the group of police-officers who surrounded Gwynplaine, but at a distance, so as not to be observed. He followed them until they came to a narrow lane between two walls, the wall on the left being that of a cemetery, that on the right one of the walls of Southwark gaol.

Here the Wapentake touched a low door with his sinister wand; it opened silently and all passed within. Many hours poor Ursus waited about in the lane, but, alas! Gwynplaine, who was more to him than a son, reappeared no more.

Sadly Ursus returned to the caravan, where by ventriloquism he pretended to be continually talking to Gwynplaine and receiving answers from him. All the attendants of the caravan were deceived by the voices—but was Dea?

Meanwhile, within the prison the terrified Gwynplaine was conducted through long corridors to a large underground torture chamber, where presided in state the Sheriff of Surrey, holding in his hand a bouquet of roses, while, lying at his, feet was a naked man spread-eagled like a St. Andrew's cross, with his body also piled up with stones.

"Confront them!" ordered the Sheriff.

Gwynplaine was pushed closer and closer to the tortured man, who, however, for long refused to open

his eyes or answer questions. It was his fourth day of torture and he was almost at his last gasp.

At length, while the attendants held the poor wretch up, the prison physician forced his eyes open. He saw Gwynplaine.

"Yes, it is he," he exclaimed. "I recognise him. I could never mistake him." And he laughed violently and sank back on the floor.

"I do not know the man!" now cried Gwynplaine in an agony. "I swear to your honour he lies. I never saw him before." For he expected to be compelled to share the terrible fate of the unhappy being before him.

"Let me go, your honour! I swear that I am only a poor mountebank," repeated Gwynplaine.

"I have before me," replied the Sheriff, "Lord Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquess of Corlione in Sicily, and a peer of England."

Rising and offering his armchair to Gwynplaine, he continued: "My lord, will your lordship deign to sit down."

From behind a pillar now issued an official of the Admiralty, who produced some signed documents which had been committed to the sea in a sealed gourd fifteen years earlier by the *comprachicos*, at the moment when their ship was sinking after they had abandoned Gwynplaine. These documents stated that Hardquanonne, the man now being tortured, was he who, with diabolical skill, had defaced Gwynplaine in infancy, while one of them stated that he was the legitimate son of Lord Clancharlie and Ann Bradshaw. A short note, signed by the infamous Judge Jeffreys, stated that it was by the order of James II. that the boy had been sold to the gang of *comprachicos*. There was no doubt about the young man's legitimacy, but

it had been by the order of Queen Anne, on the Lord Chancellor's recommendation, that Gwynplaine had been confronted with the dying Hardquanonne, who had been for many years in Chatham prison.

His recognition having been obtained, all formalities had now been complied with ; nothing would now remain to be done but for the new Lord Clancharlie to take his seat in the House of Lords. He, however, overcome by so many emotions, becomes insensible before he is dressed in grand attire, and then conveyed away in a royal carriage that is waiting for him by the above-mentioned Admiralty official and deposited in Corlione Place, at Windsor, in which palace it will be remembered is already installed the Duchess Josiane. To this lady on the following day her half-sister, the Queen, spitefully sends an order that she is to marry the ex-mountebank.

Victor Hugo, having now turned Gwynplaine into a lord, thoroughly revels in the situation that he has created. The author indulges, however, in so much detail that we cannot follow the strange story further than to say that the incident of Gwynplaine's speech in the House of Lords, when the more tragic he becomes the more the noble peers listening become convulsed with laughter, is one of the most painfully pathetic in *L'Homme qui Rit.*

As usual when he is dealing with love affairs, Hugo ends off the book badly. Dea dies with excess of joy when Gwynplaine returns to her. He commits suicide by throwing himself into the sea, while poor old Ursus is allowed to go off alone with his wolf Homo to Holland.

CHAPTER XXXIV

"QUATREVINGT-TREIZE"

AFTER the publication of that tragic book, *L'Homme qui Rit*, Victor Hugo only wrote one more romance in prose. This was *Quatrevingt-treize*, a narrative of the time of the French Revolution. It appeared in the year 1874, and was, like *L'Homme qui Rit*, a greatly-debated work.

The book was entirely written at Hauteville House, Guernsey, where, according to notes written on the manuscript by Victor Hugo, it was commenced on December 16th, 1872, and finished on June 9th, 1873.

Entirely devoid of love interest, the author commences his book in the bloody year of the Revolution, 1793, when the National Convention has fallen under the heel of Robespierre and Danton. It is at this time that the Royalists in La Vendée have engaged in a desperate struggle against the Republic, into which atmosphere of blood, of war without quarter on either side, the author leads us. Interesting as is the description of the forests in which the bloody fighting takes place and the underground dugouts in which the Breton peasants hide themselves by day to issue forth to fight or murder at night, the whole book forms but unpleasant reading—the horrors being too many.

The whole interest of the book *Quatrevingt-treize* centres on three persons. The first of these is the

old cruel and inflexible Marquis de Lantenac, the commander of the Royalist peasantry in revolt; the second the ex-Vicomte Gauvain, his great-nephew, who is in command of the Republican army fighting against his uncle, a man of saint-like character and given to mercy; and the third is Cimourdain, an ex-priest and the Delegate of the Republic sent from Paris to watch Gauvain's actions in the war in which the order has been given that neither age nor sex is to be spared.

The rigid Cimourdain had formerly been Gauvain's tutor and he loves the young general like a son. Indeed, in a battle he interposes his own body between Gauvain and one of the enemy striking at him, thus getting himself severely wounded. However, so great is his Republican virtue that he is determined to do his duty and make use of his authority to punish the man whom he loves if he persists in doing Christianlike actions and sparing the members of the Royalist forces who may have fallen into his hands.

This fact gives Victor Hugo the opportunity for one of the unhappy endings by which he so often loves to harrow the feelings of his readers. Having no lovers, like Gilliatt or Gwynplaine, this time to immolate by suicide, he causes Gauvain to permit the escape of his implacable enemy his great-uncle the Marquis de Lantenac. Thereupon, despite the prayer of the troops, who love Gauvain, Cimourdain causes their commander to be guillotined. But at the same moment as the fatal knife descends, in an anguish of grief Cimourdain blows out his own brains.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE UNCHANGING JULIETTE

Victor Hugo and Juliette Drouet remained at Paris during the siege by the Prussians. After the fall of the city, his heart turning once more to politics, Victor was in February, 1871, elected a member of the Assemblée Nationale, then in session at Bordeaux. To this place proceeded also Juliette and Charles Hugo, with his wife and two surviving children.

Victor Hugo's career as a Representative in the first Assembly of the Third Republic was short and stormy. Having insisted that it was due to Garibaldi that he should be accorded French nationality, when the House disagreed with him he resigned his seat in the month of March.

Unfortunately, just at this time his son Charles died suddenly. This death was most sad. Intending to return to Paris, Victor Hugo had assembled a number of guests at a restaurant for a farewell banquet. He was expecting his son Charles, when news was brought to him that the unfortunate young man had died in the cab upon his way to the restaurant.

The body of poor Charles was removed to Paris for interment in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise, where already reposed the bodies of General Hugo and his wife and that of Victor's brother, Eugène.

It was the sad fate of Victor Hugo to survive all of his children with the exception of his younger

daughter, Adèle, and this poor girl had better have been dead than living, since she was confined in an asylum at Paris. While in Guernsey, against her father's will, she had run away with the English captain of a vessel, who had taken her to India and there deserted her. It was as a result of her sufferings that poor Adèle had lost her senses.

The fate of Victor's elder daughter, Léopoldine, had been most tragic. Five months after her marriage in the spring of 1843 to a young fellow named Charles Vacquerie, she was drowned together with her husband. There was a strange fatality about this drowning. Owing to the fact that living on the banks of the lower part of the Seine, where the mounting tide frequently caused a swell in the river, Léopoldine had been warned that in case of a boating accident she should cling to the boat if it were capsized. When the accident came which caused her death on September 4th, 1843, Léopoldine, her husband, and two male relations, were all in a boat together when it was upset in a sudden squall. Thereupon the unfortunate girl remembered her lesson only too well. She seized the side of the boat with such a grip that her husband, who was a good swimmer, was quite unable to make her release her hold. When Charles Vacquerie realised that although near the shore, his wife must be drowned, he voluntarily threw up his arms and shared her fate. The others escaped.

Two years after his brother Charles, Victor Hugo's other son, François-Victor, died in the year 1873.

Now it was that the bereaved father turned for consolation to the two little children, a boy and a girl, whom Charles had left behind. He hired a house in the Rue de Clichy, and while Juliette Drouet, with her maid Suzanne, took possession of the third floor, Madame Charles Hugo, with the children and their

grandfather, went one storey higher, and occupied the fourth floor.

Now commenced a time of almost daily dinner-parties; seldom were there less than six or seven persons extra in to dinner nightly. The despatch of the invitations as well as all the arrangements fell to the lot of Juliette, who had five servants under her orders and was, therefore, kept constantly occupied.

Although the faithful friend of the poet was now in the position of being the mistress of his establishment, she had begun to feel herself growing old and showed no signs of wishing to take an active part in the conversation of the numerous people for whom daily she provided the dinner. On the contrary, at the end of her days of labour, she preferred to go off quietly to sit in an armchair in the corner to interesting herself in the buzz of the frequently political talk around her.

Nevertheless, when Victor stood for election to the Senate in 1875, she attended all his political meetings with him, and religiously sat through all the speeches. Moreover, later, when he was elected and had daily to take the train to Versailles to attend the meetings of the Senate, Juliette no more allowed her Victor to go to the station alone than, thirty years earlier, she had allowed him to go alone when, in search of votes for admission to the Académie française, he had been compelled to visit all the sitting members in turn, to solicit their suffrages.

Not only did Juliette conduct Victor Hugo to the station, but frequently she accompanied him to Versailles, and there waited for him until he was ready to return to Paris. Her devotion remained unparallelled; she even was to be seen at the side of Victor Hugo in the crowd upon occasion of the somewhat stormy obsequies of political friends, and, lastly, when the poet resolved to make an ascension in a captive

balloon Juliette mounted up into the realms of ether in his company.

We need not follow further the efforts of Juliette Drouet to watch over the man whom she loved beyond words, save to mention that in matters pertaining to the reproduction of his dramas she was ever by his side at the repetitions, and ready with her advice; while upon the nights of the first performances she was in her place in the theatre to give the signal to lead the applause.

All this time Juliette was writing to her Victor daily, sometimes more than one letter a day, and these letters, equally with those written when she was young, breathe such an atmosphere of faithful love and devotion that the heart is touched at them.

There was all the more merit in Juliette's unswerving devotion to her Victor in her old age, when we remember that he himself showed no sign of the weight of years. Sturdy as an oak, he was upright and vigorous in his bearing; he remained as full of the *joie de vivre* as a man of half his age.

That the ladies of Paris of all ages were in the habit of making up to her poet Juliette knew, as also the fact that he was not unsusceptible to their attentions and flattery. From the letters and scented notes arriving, from the *agaceries* and *gentillesses* of the ladies whom Juliette saw in the great author's company, and, finally, from his own admissions, and promises, like a naughty boy, "not to do it again," she knew that she had cause to be anxious.

For his part, Victor Hugo could no more do without Juilette than she without him, and he had not the slightest intention of paying her the bad compliment of marrying again, in the hope of raising a new family, or for any other reason. But in his effort to enjoy to the full that which remained to him of life, it is to

be feared that the poet was not at times above stooping, at any rate half-way down, to pick up the rosebuds flung among the laurels at his feet.

Juliette forgot the fact that it is the business of a poet to write verses, and therefore she took far too much *au grand sérieux* the little poems that he threw off from time to time for the benefit of one pretty lady or another. We can imagine how a man with the name of Victor Hugo would be solicited for one of his efforts in verse, if it were only an inscription in an album, and how it would be treasured to be handed down to posterity. The super-sensitive Juliette, however, saw the hand of the evil one behind the pen that indited any such poems whenever the fact that they had been written came under her notice. She must, we fear, have tired Victor Hugo at times with her reproaches, and we do not much wonder if in consequence he endeavoured to conceal from Juliette as much as possible his little *fredaines*.

A specimen of one of poor Juliette's unhappy, and, it must be admitted, somewhat foolish, complaints, is to be found in a letter dated Paris, Saturday, April 4th, 1.45 P.M. :

" I thank you, my greatly beloved, for having had the loyalty to tell me this morning that you had written some new verses for Mme. M. . . . I thank you for having had the goodness of offering to read them to me and to send them later. At first I had accepted this delay, but upon reflection I understood that that which is deferred is not lost, that I should gain nothing by opposing your junction with that *statue tenanted by a star*, and that I was only idiotically making myself as ridiculous as the ostrich, which thinks to avoid danger by covering up its head in the sand. That is why, my well-beloved, I beg you to act in

full liberty in sending whenever you choose verses dedicated to your lovely inspirer. This poetry having been extracted, it is simple enough that now you should become intoxicated with one another, and so much the worse for my thirst. For that matter, to me infidelity does not merely commence with action, I regard it as already established by the mere fact of the desire. With that established, my dear, great friend, I beg you not to concern yourself but to behave just as if I were no longer there. That will give me the time to rest myself a bit from life before taking my flight for eternity. Try to be happy if you can."

When Juliette freely reproached Victor with such crimes as "duplicity and lying," and continued by preaching to him upon the necessity of "the evening of his days being venerable and sacred," he never resented these words. He merely smiled, while calling his somewhat trying companion by the name of "the schoolmistress."

He was, however, much afraid of hurting his schoolmistress's feelings, and anxious that she should not be disturbed by the arrival of foolish letters addressed to him by his female admirers.

In the year 1873 he suddenly became ill in Paris, when he went off with the whole of his family for a stay in Guernsey with a view to recovering his health. Then, according to a friend, his recovery was by no means hastened owing to his anxiety as to what the post might bring him from some of the little doves who had been fluttering around his wreath of bays in Paris.

Juliette, as usual, was watching over Victor Hugo, and frequently by his bedside until he had become partly re-established in health. It is to be feared that an olive leaf from one of the dove's beaks must

then have fluttered down into the lap of the faithful attendant in the sick room, for it was at this time, and while still endeavouring to recover his strength, that "the naughty boy" was so forcibly accused of not confining himself strictly to the truth.

Oh, well! as the Latin poet said a thousand years ago: "The quarrels of lovers are but the renewal of love," and, despite these occasional misunderstandings, such was the case between Victor Hugo and Juliette Drouet.

On return to Paris they had moved into the house already mentioned in the Avenue Eylau, or Avenue Victor Hugo, to give it its new name, which was all surrounded with shrubs and trees, and here each of them once more occupied a storey.

It was at that time quite like a rural residence, and in it, while Juliette occupied the ground floor, Victor had chosen the one above. He had not yet become restored to health, and Juliette was ill, in fact, she knew herself to be very ill, of a lingering illness. She it was, however, who installed herself in an uncomfortable little closet near at hand, so as to be able to wait upon Victor at night; she, again, who awakened him by a kiss upon the brow in the morning. She lighted his fire, cooked his eggs for him, waited upon him at his breakfast, cut open the morning papers, read him the leading articles, especially everything concerning himself or his work. No labour was too arduous for her to undertake on his behalf. It was everything for him, nothing for herself!

When Victor Hugo was restored to health and commenced once more to attend the sittings of the Senate at Versailles, Juliette, however, accompanied him no longer. No more now did she accompany him to the home of the Immortals, the Académie française. Wearily, during the last year or two of

her life, passed for her the long, lonely hours of these absences, hours which, from the evidence of her letters, were to a great extent occupied with thoughts of the happy past and of the unknown future before her.

A sad cry of doubt, of fear, arises from the lips of Juliette during these latter days. She has so constantly mixed up Victor Hugo in her thoughts with God, that now in her distress, in her uncertainty of the future, she doubts of both together. She writes : " Discouraged, I doubt of heaven and of you." What does she mean by these words ? It is difficult to follow the exact trend of her thought. We gather, however, that she is not afraid of death. She longs for relief from her sufferings and wishes to pass away, " like the last ray of sun from a roof or the last brand flickering upon the hearth."

Nevertheless, it was long before Juliette gave way. She even, in September, 1882, went for a trip with Victor Hugo down the Seine to Villequier, where lived his friend, Auguste Vacquerie, the brother of the Charles who had been drowned with Léopoldine at that place.

A couple of months later, determined as ever to shew her keen interest in Victor's work, she got up from her bed to go to the theatre to see his resuscitated play, *Le Roi s'amuse,* which had been banned after the first night of its performance in 1832.

Juliette continued to write her letters for a little time longer. The last is dated Monday, January 1st, 1883. It is very short, and sums up everything in the one all-comprehensive word, " love." It runs as follows :

" My dear Adored One

" I do not know where I shall be next year at this time, but I am happy and proud to sign for

you my life's certificate for this existence in the one word: I love you.

"JULIETTE."

What were Victor Hugo's feelings as he watched the woman whom he had so loved fading away before his eyes? A few years earlier he had written for Juliette some charming verses, in which he spoke of "the impossibility" of their being able to live the one without the other. These verses, which Juliette knew by heart and loved, we reproduce:

"Quand deux cœurs, en s'aimant, ont doucement vieilli,
Ô quel bonheur profond, intime, recueilli!
Amour, hymen d'en haut, ô pur lien des âmes!
Il garde ses rayons, même en perdant ses flammes.
Ces deux cœurs qu'il a pris jadis n'en font plus qu'un,
Il fait des souvenirs de leur passé commun
L'impossibilité de vivre l'un sans l'autre;
Juliette, n'est ce pas? cette vie est la nôtre!
Il a la paix du soir avec l'éclat du jour,
Et devient l'amitié, tout en restant l'amour."

Daily Victor Hugo sat by the bedside of the woman who had been so much to him, and during these visits, no matter what her sufferings, Juliette smiled, looked cheerful and happy. She would not distress her Toto!

She passed away on May 11th, 1883, and just two years later Victor Hugo followed her to the tomb.

He was enjoying vigorous health when, after entertaining many guests on the evening of May 14th, 1885, he was suddenly attacked with congestion of the lungs. On the twenty-second of the month, to the great grief of all Paris, he passed away. Although Victor Hugo had modestly expressed a desire to be buried in a pauper's hearse, the Council of Ministers decreed him a public funeral at the expense of the State. So to his remains were accorded probably the most wonderful obsequies ever seen in France.

After lying in state for a day and a night under the Arc de Triomphe, his body was escorted by troops through streets crowded by at least a hundred thousand people to the Panthéon. There it was deposited, after orations had been delivered over it by many famous orators and persons of note.

The passing of Victor Hugo was felt as a loss not in France alone but all over Europe, where the great genius was universally regretted.

THE END

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